29
July 1988

NEW TIMES

SOVIET WEEKLY
WORLD AFFAIRS

Eight years of Reaganomics: the President's legacy

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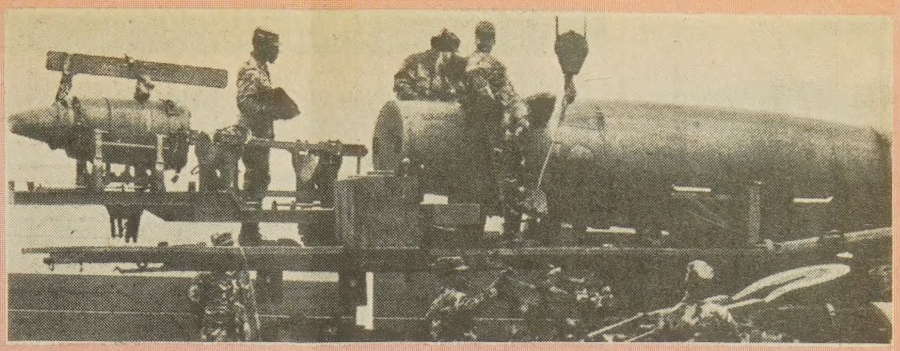

New political thinking is an answer to the challenges world developments offer. It stands for democratic and humane international relations, a creative approach to talks and readiness to cooperate.

See pp. 11, 13, 15.

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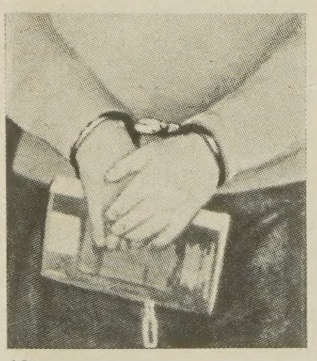

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Cover by Vladimir Pchelkin

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OPINIONS

Oleg Larichev,
student

■ A couple of months ago I paid a visit to the parents of a friend who was then serving in Afghanistan. They were glad to see me. His mother showed me a letter they had received from their son the day before. My friend wrote that he felt homesick and hoped to return soon. He only had just over a month to serve. We had tea and made plans for the future. The mother asked me what clothes were now in fashion among young people. An hour after I left, the parents were notified of their son's death.

I returned from Afghanistan a year ago, safe and sound. But the memories of my time there still cause pain, like a splinter in the body, perhaps with the only difference that no operation can remove it.

The Geneva agreements mean not only the withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan. They are a victory of common sense over callousness and arbitrariness. At the 19th Party Conference the agreements were justly called an important international landmark in the political settlement of regional conflicts.

At a press conference on the results of the Geneva talks, a Western journalist asked Eduard Shevardnadze what our generals thought of their virtual defat in the war, the first in the history of our country. The foreign minister replied that the Soviet Union did not consider it a defeat, while I would add once again that the Geneva agreements mean a victory.

They are a victory for the mothers who anxiously await letters from their sons, for the soldiers now returning home, and for the dead who will never come back but who brought the Geneva agreements nearer. They are a victory of life over death, of the future over the past, a victory for perestroika.

Albert Riotto,
Rovno, U.S.S.R.

■ The reform of the political system outlined at the 19th Party Conference is to provide for a consistent and lasting change in production relations, and bring these relation into conformity with the developing productive forces.

I suggest that one of the deputy chairmen of the Soviet parliament head not only the People's Control Committee but also the Central Control Commission, to which 35 to 40 members of the party's Central Committee should be delegated. This does not mean a division of power in the party, because the Central Control Commission is not expected to enjoy power. At the same time, the prestige of a board consisting of Central Committee members will ensure one more real guarantee of perestroika. If we are to overcome the braking mechanism, the Leninist principles of party and Soviet control should be restored. This function could be exercised by the Central Control Commission. Or perhaps it would have a different name.

Evgeny Simonov,
People's Artist of the U.S.S.R.
Moscow

■ I am deeply disturbed by the state of affairs in the theatre. The air is full of empty talk about it, and various projects for organizing theatrical work are being suggested. New forms of directing theatres are being discussed, and passions are running high in the unions of creative workers. But the Muse keeps sadly silent. It may be asked whether playwrights, stage managers and actors should enthusiastically plunge into organizational work, killing the artists in themselves.

It would give me great pleasure to read a new play or see a new performance, a new revelation of actors on the stage. The reason for the silence is not that theatrical workers are still busy with perestroika and unable to comprehend its full meaning. That is no excuse. Griboyedov wrote his "Wit works woe" before the December 1825 uprising, and Turgenev his "Fathers and sons" before the real nihilists had appeared. Theatrical workers must restrain their organizational zeal and concentrate on art. The great philosopher Seneca said: "Everywhere is nowhere." One couldn't have put it better.

Grigori Polunov
New York, U.S.A.

■ I have sent this letter to the leaders of two countries – Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. On May 1, 1988 I began an open-ended fast and will stop it when I am convinced that all nuclear testing has been discontinued. As a man experienced in fasting, I'll not give up food completely: I'll eat juicy fruit because the fast will require of me the capacity for work, and nobody knows how long it will last. Nevertheless, I do not want others to fast as I do. It is not my aim to demonstrate heroism. My aim is peace.

The time is ripe to cleanse the earth of nuclear weapons. The nuclear explosions are dangerous not only for us. They imperil the future of our children. It is immoral and irresponsible to continue nuclear tests. We are all citizens of the planet Earth. Let us look at things from this point of view. Everyone must ask himself: "What can I do for peace?" One fine day I put this question to myself and found an answer in a fast of protest. Let us stop merely talking about peace. It is time we should do something for it.

A MATTER AT ISSUE

Tom Hopkins
Caerphilly, Britain

■ I think the position of those Soviet people who compare Stalin to Hitler plays into the hands of reactionary forces inside and outside the country. It is a wrong policy, in my opinion, to concentrate on exposing the mistakes and weaknesses of people who led the country at one time or another. Besides, Stalin did not destroy the foundations of socialism in the Soviet Union. In spite of the international interference and even direct aggression, socialism was strong and well established under Stalin. I am sure I am not alone in this opinion.

Evgeny Melnichenko
Kemerovo, U.S.S.R.

■ Nino Monteleone suggests in his letter (No. 20/88) that we restore the evaluation of Stalin's role that existed in our country before the 20th party congress. I would like to object by recal-

GLASNOST

ng what the Italian Com-unist Party leader Palmiro ogliatti said in 1964. Con-adictions, difficulties, new roblems arise in all socialist ountries, he wrote then, and ey should be treated in ac-ordance with their real sig-ificance. One should not first reate the impression that all well and then try to explain e difficult situations in re-ospect, saying their appear-nce was inevitable.

I have in mind not only eparate facts but all the roblems, both economic nd political, involved in uilding socialism, because e West has a very superfi-al knowledge of them. For y part, I can add that we ere unable to give faithful valuation of the misdeeds of alin and his associates on enough, and that is cer-inly our fault.

Lest it happen again, we ould not conceal the truth om the people, however arsh it may be. Only this can elp us understand history nd guarantee that the past ill not be an obstacle in our ay to the future.

V. Lukashev
Gorky, U.S.S.R.

■ In the past 70 years our country and party have been fighting against religion. Atheist magazines have been published and radio programmes broadcast. And now all of a sudden everything has changed. Only yesterday religion was treated almost with hostility. It was argued that the believers were mistaken and misguided. Today the higheset dignitaries of the church are being decorated, and attempts are being made to enhance its image in the eyes of the people. Will not our new position strengthen the church and lead to the opening of new churches and monasteries and perhaps even parochial schools?

For all the talk of perestroika, it seems to me that we are going too far. The Party must give a firm answer. What is religion? Is it compatible with communist ideals and morals and, most importantly, should we continue to fight against it? Personally, I am against the destruction of churches. Many of them could be made into museums of our national history. But I am against the increasing influence of the church, the more so in that it seems to be taking the initiative from our hands.

I think a man goes to church only when he has lost faith that anyone else can help him. That is why, I think, we should pay close attention to the cultural life of man and do everything possible to make it richer. We should not wait for the church to do it instead.

Alexander Kalinin
Zhirovitskaya cloister,
Grodno Region, U.S.S.R.

■ As a believer, I am pleased when an atheist regards me less as an ideological adversary than as a Soviet citizen with the same rights and duties as his own. It is for this reason that I welcome perestroika, which has revised the official attitude to the believers. Thanks to this move, the prestige of the party and its members, for whom old women pray in the church too, has risen tremendously.

Perhaps some are shocked by the present state of affairs, by the idea that things were different in the past. I would like to reply to this by saying that in the past we did not have perestroika either.

There is one more gratifying fact, in my opinion. Not long ago our believers read underground literature about an approaching doomsday and the persecution of the faithful. That was understandable. Having experienced more than one war, and injustices on the part of zealous atheists who committed excesses in the struggle against religion, they eagerly believed every word from abroad.

GLASNOST

But were these words truthful? Didn't Western ideologists try in this way to confuse the souls of those who found no answers to the vital issues at home?

Those who only yesterday were not intersted in politics are actively discussing it today. In the churches believers pray – and, believe me, sincerly – for the health of Mikhail. It is interesting that underground literature, much in demand among believers quite recently, has lost its meaning for them, and they are naturally not interested in it any longer. What has been achieved in the past three years could not have been achieved during the previous decades.

Perestroka is justly called a second revolution. I accept it 99 per cent. Something is wrong, however, in the struggle against hard drinking. I understand that bans will not help here just as, for instance, belief cannot be banned either. The forbidden fruit becomes especially desired. It is necessary to think and work much to offer spiritual sustenance for the souls of young people.

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HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

PRIVATE OPINION

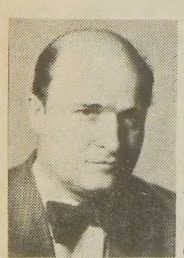
YURI AFANASYEV, historian

Soviet newspapers reported a few days ago that the CC CPSU Political Bureau commission inquiring into the repressions of the 1930-40s and early 1950s had been informed by the Party Control Committee of its decision to reinstate as Party members N. Bukharin, A. Rykov, A. Rosengholtz, M. Chernov and other comrades accused of affiliation with the "anti-Soviet right-wing Trotskyite bloc."

This decision can be understood properly in connection with other similar decisions, because they are characteristic of the Party's attitude to the victims of Stalin's repressions and of the consistency of this process.

This process probably has two aspects, equally significant for the democratization and restoration of Leninist standards in Party life. First of all, we are learning the truth about a complex period in our history, and about the revolution and the building of socialism in our country. The civic rehabilitation, the withdrawal of absurd charges, enables us to make an unbiassed assessment of the role of one or other personality. We see how the blanks in Soviet history are being filled in, and it is gratifying that the Political Bureau is setting the tone in this work.

Secondly, the political rehabilitation, and reinstatement of Bukharin, Rykov, Rosengholtz, Chernov and other comrades is very important for democratic processes in the Party – democratic in deeds, not in words. The Party is demonstrating its genuine attitude to the right of each member to have his own view on this or that question of Party life.



HANS WILFRIED GRAFERS, head of the Salzgitter AG office (F.R.G.) in Moscow

I have noted with great interest that the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, at its 44th meeting in Prague, pointed to the need to set realistic exchange rates for the currencies of socialist states.

The CMEA and the EEC have established official relations by signing a joint declaration in Luxemburg. I consider this a positive step towards improving the political and economic climate in Europe. The signing of the Luxemburg document, the changes taking place in the CMEA, and perestroika in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are providing, in my opinion, good prerequisites for an extension of economic ties between capitalist and socialist states.

All this, I think, could prove auspicious for broader East-West trade. I also have in mind the lifting of bans on some goods. The Soviet Union and its allies could take advantage of the creation of a common West European market by 1992 to increase the share of finished products in their export. But for this purpose they will have to remove bureaucratic obstacles and raise the quality of their goods.

The more successfully the CMEA countries compete on West European markets, the wider our opportunities will be on the markets of the socialist states.

SADRUDDIN AGA-KHAN, coordinator for U.N. humanitarian and economic assistance programmes relating to Afghanistan

I have arrived in Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet government to discuss the U.N. programme for humanitarian and economic aid to the people of Afghanistan. It is the first U.N. operation of its kind in which many U.N. specialized agencies will take part. The donations made by different states in cash and kind form a common aid fund. The multilateral aid operation will be completely apolitical. I think it may be a key to peace in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Aid is to be given to all Afghans who need it, irrespective of who controls the area they live in. It will naturally be distributed regardless of the aid rendered to Afghanistan by other countries, including the Soviet Union, on a bilateral basis.

The activity of Diego Cordovez, which led to the conclusion of the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan, and my own mission, are concrete examples of what the United Nations can do through its innovative actions to settle regional conflicts, ease world tensions and, in the final count, normalize relations between the two superpowers.

My talks in Moscow with Eduard Shevardnadze and Vsevolod Murakhovsky have shown that the Soviet Union is backing our efforts, appreciates the multilateral humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, and is prepared to make its own contribution to it.

A new level of mutual trust

Mikhail Gorbachev's official friendly visit to the Polish People's Republic

Mikhail Gorbachev talking with the people of Warsaw

TASS photo

The process of perestroika in the .S.S.R. has evoked a deep response in olish society. And this finds expression, st and foremost, in the Poles' attitude wards us and our country, an attitude hich, it must be said, has often been mbivalent at critical moments of history the four postwar decades. Increasing umbers of Poles are beginning to under- and that our countries have embarked n a single course.

Two events – the 19th CPSU Confer- nce and the official friendly visit to Po- nd of General Secretary Mikhail Gor- achev – have particularly markedly in- nsified these favourable changes and oduced a special atmosphere that one n sense virtually everywhere. For prob- ly the first time in the long years that I ve had ties with Poland I felt a warmth d sincerity that nothing marred in the titude to Soviet people, growing on the ceptive soil of profound interest in our esent changes.

To quote the views of an eminent olish scholar, the Director of the Insti- te of Political Studies of Warsaw Uni- rsity, Professor Artur Bodnar: "One ten hears in the West, and not only ere, that the political situation in Poland constantly unstable. But this impres- on arises particularly often among ose who are accustomed to thinking in chés and who see socialism as a rigid phenomenon. In other words, the kind of socialism which, I'm convinced, is becoming a thing of the past. Polish society is a living, internally complex organism which is not free of contradictions.

"The Polish United Workers' Party is leading the renewal of social life and the process of reorganizing people's power," continued the Professor. "Together with its coalition allies, it is determining new horizons for the development of socialism. In Poland today, everything is in fact in a state of exploration and change. In such circumstances contradictions between different social groups and conflict situations are inevitable. Therein lies the complexity of the dynamics of renewal."

Professor Bodnar's words remind one that very similar ideas and assessments were voiced at our Party conference.

"That Mikhail Gorbachev is being received here as a man symbolizing the spirit of reform not only in your country, but in world socialism, as a friend of a Poland advancing along the road of modernization," concluded Professor Bodnar, "is only logical." Indeed, the Polish renewal is part of the profound transformations of the socialist system, a sign of the new times for socialism as a whole that has come with Soviet perestroika. A view that is very widely held in Poland these days is that the 19th CPSU Conference and Mikhail Gorbachev's visit will have a favourable effect on the process of changing the economic mechanisms and political life in Poland. I think this view is well founded.

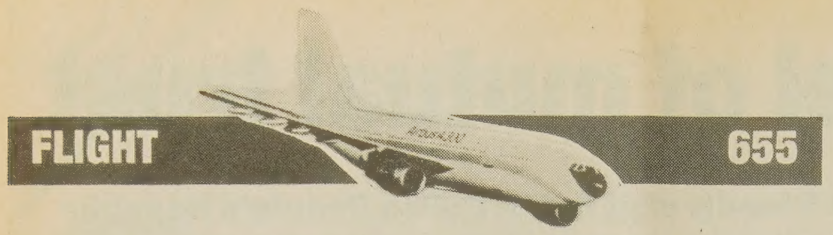
In conclusion I should like to make two points in connection with Gorbachev's Polish visit. First: Soviet-Polish relations have achieved new level of mutual trust. And second: the development of the general European process in which our countries play a perceptible role.

Addressing the Polish Sejm, Mikhail Gorbachev suggested a gathering of all European countries to discuss just one question: how to break out of the present vicious circle and ensure the transition from words to deeds in the field of the reduction of conventional armaments? He called such a meeting a second "Reykjavik," only this time a European one. He also suggested setting up a European Centre for reducing the danger of war, where NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization could cooperate. Such a centre could prove a useful structure, enhancing peace in Europe.

It was once again underlined during the visit that the idea of building a common European home should be the cause of all European countries and the widest range of political movements.

Rudolf Borecki
our own correspondent
WARSAW, July 12

A report from our special correspondent in Poland can be found on p. 27



Echoes of the Gulf tragedy

The shooting down of the Iranian passenger plane by the American Navy has been discussed at the U.N. Security Council. No other event in the Persian Gulf has aroused such a strong reaction in the world community. The United States' proclaimed policy of protecting shipping has in effect turned into open military interference in the already extremely tense situation in the area. Now not only shipping, but also plane routes are in danger in areas in which the American Navy maintains a presence. The U.S. Administration is now seeking to justify its action.

U.S.A.: "Reasonable and right"

According to an opinion poll conducted by ABC together with The Washington Post, 61 per cent of those polled are against America paying out any compensation. Seventy-one per cent believe that the Commander of the Vincennes made the right decision in ordering a missile attack on the approaching Iranian plane.

Vice-President George Bush said that had he been President he would not have apologized to Iran.

White House spokesman Fitzwater said that the Administration believes its policy in the Persian Gulf to be reasonable and right, and has no intention of altering it... We have succeeded in maintaining our presence for the purpose of ruling out a Soviet presence.

The rest of the world: "Shocked"

President Ali Khamenei of Iran said that the matter was not closed, as President Reagan had earlier declared, but was only beginning.

The Tanzanian paper Uhuru asks who authorized the U.S.A. to assume the role of international gendarme.

In Algeria the paper Al-Chaab: "Nothing can justify the United States air piracy or its jungle law policy."

Nigeria's Herald: "The uncalled-for presence of American warships in the Persian Gulf must inevitably have led to a tragedy like the one that occurred last Sunday. The piratical attack on an Iranian air liner and the bombing of Libya are examples of Rambo-style American adventurism that jeopardizes the future of mankind."*

Sweden's Acting Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen: "This tragedy serves to confirm the fears aroused by the continuing military escalation in the Persian Gulf, and has demonstrated once again the urgent need to reduce tension in the region."

Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister of Austria, Alois Mock: "Austria has always consistently and steadily supported the efforts made by the U.N. Secretary-General in connection with Security Council resolution 598 to settle the conflict in the Persian Gulf area. The latest tragic event confirms the rightness of such a stand."

Spain's Trade Union Confederation of Worker's Commissions: "The U.S. military action in the Persian Gulf, as a result of which an Iranian passenger plane was shot down, is cruel mass murder."

An official spokesman for the Syrian government: "A revolting crime..."

Panama's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "...Washington has committed a barbaric crime against innocent people, among whom were women and children. This crime stems from the U.S. neoglobal policy in regard to other countries and entire regions."

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): "Shocked by the news of the destruction of an Iranian airliner that led to the death of its passengers and crew. The policy of ICAO is aimed at ensuring the safety of civil aircraft flights along authorized air routes. The ICAO strongly opposes the use of weapons against civilian planes."*

The Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe: "The shooting down of an Iranian civilian aircraft is the direct outcome of the building up by a great power of its naval strength in an extremely tense region."*

British TV commented that the sympathies of the entire world are on Iran's side, but any resolution condemning the U.S.A. would be blocked by an American veto.

**Retranslated from Russian*

Victims of a "tragic error"

What is AEGIS

From the "Jane's Weapon Systems" directory:

The naval missile complex AEGIS (U.S.) belongs to the surface-to-air class of weapons. The cruiser Vincennes carries such a system. It consists of a guided missile and a launching installation. Its system for targeting and controlling the fire is one of the three subsystems of the AEGIS complex linked to an AN/VYK-7 computer.

Multi-functional computerized radar system.

Radio targeting system, consisting of four AN/VYK-7 computers.

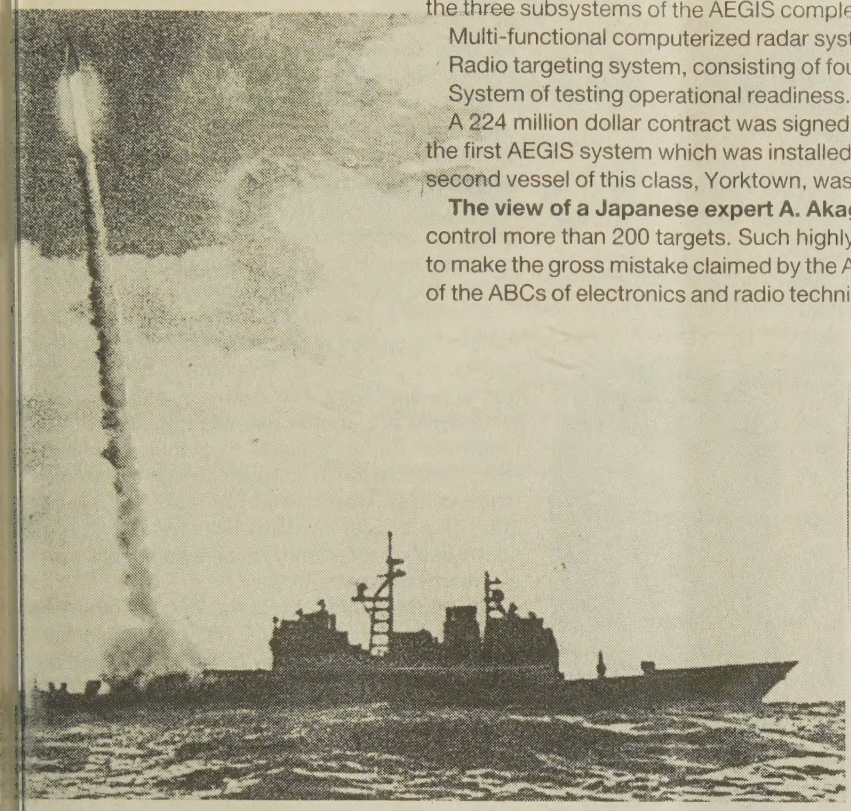
System of testing operational readiness.

A 224 million dollar contract was signed in 1978 for the construction and testing of the first AEGIS system which was installed on the cruiser Ticonderoga. In July 1984 a second vessel of this class, Yorktown, was equipped with an AEGIS system.

The view of a Japanese expert A. Akagi: "The AEGIS system can simultaneously control more than 200 targets. Such highly advanced new technology is hardly likely to make the gross mistake claimed by the American Defence Department. Knowledge of the ABCs of electronics and radio techniques indicate that on a radar screen an airbus and a fighter aircraft look absolutely different. Their size, speeds etc. are in a ratio of about 100 to 2. It is extremely difficult to mistake such objects."

The Pentagon also said that the airbus was attacked because it was flying too low and straight at the cruiser. However, even according to American data, its altitude and speed clearly did not correspond to the concept of an attack by a modern aircraft on a naval target. What also arouses doubts is that the U.S.A. did not identify the precise position from which the aircraft was shot down.

The view of a Soviet military expert, an Air Force General: "The probability of mistaking the nature of the target (a civilian A-300 type aircraft or a military F-14 fighter) on an effectively reflecting surface (reflection factor of the radar screen) during a flight en route used by civilian aircraft is practically nil."



sile launching from the Vincennes.
Standard-2 missile used to shoot down the Iranian airbus: weight – 400 kg., geting system – radar, altitude of interception – re than 18,000 metres, speed – Mach 2.5.

Will another button be pressed?

A small curly-haired boy in shorts and a T-shirt with IRAN writ- n on it in big letters standing at the very centre of a black rget. The caption underneath reads: "It's an Iranian threat – LL!"

That drawing from the influential bourgeois paper The Hin- stan Times probably most accurately reflects the reaction of de sections of the Indian public to the U.S, criminal act in the rsian Gulf – an attitude that is a mixture of profound grief for e innocent passengers aboard the Iranian airliner, among om there were nine Indian citizens, and righteous indignation er the action of the American military.

Commenting on the incident in The Times of India, Narendra pta, an expert from the Indian Institute of Defence Studies d Analyses, noted, first, that he believed the place where the nian ariliner fell was on the direct route between the town of ndar Abbas and Dubai, the starting point and destination of e plane, that is, well within the international air route known as nber-59.

Secondly, even if it had been the F-14 fighter for which the air- er was allegedly mistaken, these planes are not equipped h air-to-ground missiles and therefore could not represent y threat to the cruiser Vincennes.

Thirdly, according to the explanations given by Crowe, the btain of the cruiser considered the plane's course as evi- nce of its hostile intentions. But how can the commander of the Iranian plane be blamed if the cruiser was in the path of the plane's planned route?

Fourthly, Narendra Gupta asks, where were the American air force AWACS planes based in Saudi Arabia that conduct round-the-clock radar observation of all flights over the Persian Gulf? Surely they should have informed the Vincennes of the approach of a civilian aircraft.

Rajiv Gandhi's government issued a statement condemning the U.S. action and stressing that peace in the region must be restored through negotiations, with due consideration for the interests of all countries involved, and not through the fruitless use of force.

The Chief of the International department of the All-India Committee of the ruling Indian National Congress (I), Romesh Bhandari, stressed in an interview with your correspondent the urgent need to get the Iran-Iraq war ended as soon as possible. Certain powers, he pointed out, should not try to play the part of a gendarmes in this area or elsewhere in the world. That is extremely important.

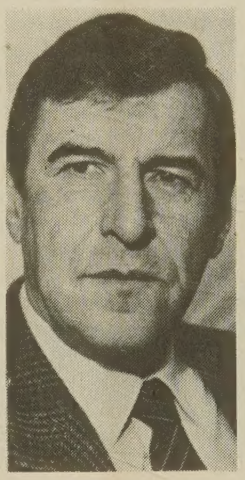
In conclusion he queried: What guarantee is there that, perhaps quite accidentally, pressing a similar button will not launch a nuclear missile which could destroy everything living on earth?

Photo from "Jane's Weapon Systems" and AP-IRNA

Material prepared by Dmitry Zgersky, Mikhail Khrobostov (Moscow), New Times special correspondent Sergei Irodov (Delhi)

Pharisees

Sergei Golyakov



The world community is still recovering from the shock caused by the tragedy in the air over the Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, a mere 48 hours after the fateful rocket attack on the passengers of a civil air liner, President Reagan declared the matter of the Iranian airbus closed.

Search teams were only beginning to recover the bodies of the dead from water. The bodies of the crew and passengers – women and children among them – had not yet been committed to their graves, but the White House declared the matter closed. The President told newsmen that the United States had exercised its inalienable right to self-defence. Vice-President Bush supported the Chief Executive by saying that the commander of the cruiser was right, as he had not wanted to "put those heroic kids of his in harm's way."

Is the matter really closed? Nearly three hundred lives were lost, but America feels no guilt. The incident has been filed away and the sooner Americans forget about it, the better. Is this not hypocrisy, pure and simple?

Any parallel between the shooting down of the Iranian airbus over the Strait of Hormuz and the loss of the South Korean plane over the Sakhalin Island in September 1983 obviously holds no water. But nevertheless, parallels have been drawn between the two incidents. Immediately after the Gulf tragedy, newsmen tried to draw the head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Crowe on the issue as well as the Soviet Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who was paying a visit to Washington. The matter was also raised with official spokesmen in Moscow. You may remember that the South Korean Boeing had strayed five hundred kilometres from its route into Soviet airspace in the dead of night. All its lights were turned off as it manoeuvred in coordination with an American reconnaissance aircraft with roughly the same radar signature for two and a half hours over a highly sensitive strategic area on Soviet territory. Its flight was terminated only after all the possibiltiies for inducing the invader to land at a local airfield had been exhausted. The Iranian airbus was on a regular flight over Iranian territory and international waters and it was within an air traffic lane assigned to civil aviation when the American rocket hit it in broad daylight thousands of miles from U.S. territory.

Clearly, there are no grounds for drawing any parallels here, but it would be worthwhile comparing the responses of the United States and its allies to the two incidents. Five years ago, in September 1983, I was in London for New Times and I saw the peak of anti-Soviet hysteria. British television kept showing the U.S. President, who declared that those who value human life and undertake special efforts to protect and preserve it in a civilized society must reflect on the nature of regimes that do not recognize these principles. As they contemplated the President's words, British politicians insisted on punitive action against the "Russian barbarians." Proposals were made to withdraw Aeroflot's landing rights in Western capitals, close ports to Soviet ships, and call off all scheduled scientific, cultural, and political exchanges, etc. My milkman and newsagent also decided to take action as the campaign gathered momentum and I stopped getting buttermilk and papers in the morning.

The tragedy could happen again

At present the Western moralists who value human life so highly are again calling for undertaking "special efforts," this time to produce arguments justifying the criminal action. Their statements are at best express regret and condolences. Prime Minister Thatcher, however, used the occasion to support the right to self-defence of U.S. warships in the Gulf, that is, the right of a cruiser bristling with the ultimate in sophisticated weaponry to defend herself from an unarmed passenger liner.

The saddest thing about the whole incident is that it seems the Americans have accepted that line of reasoning. Of every ten people polled by ABC and The Washington Post, seven said that the commander of Vincennes did the right thing when he ordered the attack on the Iranian liner, and six opposed the payment of compensation to Iran. Whatever has happened to lofty American values?

What explanation of that fact the poll-takers may come up with is pure guesswork. My own view is that here again we are dealing with a might-is-right philosophy under which no holds are barred. Whatever the truth about the circumstances of the loss of the Iranian liner, perhaps the root of evil is firmly planted here.

Numerous facts indicate that the U.S. Navy is inclined to treat the Gulf as an internal waterway of the United States. It lays down ground rules there and the signs are that it feels free to do anything at all. The cruiser Vincennes, which appeared in the Gulf at the end of May, has, according to The Washington Post, created dangerous situations there on many occasions by interfering with the heavy civil air traffic. On one occasion it very nearly caused a collision between two air liners and the United Arab Emirates lodged a protest over the incident with the U.S. embassy in Abu Dhabi. The Washington Post says that U.S. warships are a threat to passenger planes and to human lives. Neither protests nor warnings have cooled the hotheads or made their advocates abandon their pharisaical stand. The U.S. administration has no intention of reviewing its policies in the Gulf because, as Washington has said, it considers them reasonable and right. There have been no objections to these policies from London, Paris, or Tokyo, and U.S. pirates continue to have a free hand in the Gulf. The tragedy could happen again.

U.S.S.R. Prosecutor-General ALEXANDER SUKHAREV:

On the fate of Soviet prisoners of war

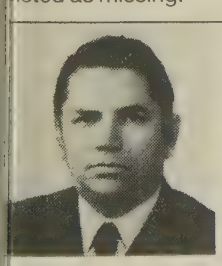
New Times. Soviet soldiers are returning home from Afghanistan. But the Soviet people are worried by the fate of those who have been captured by the mujahedeens. What information does the Prosecutor's Office have about their fates?

Alexander Sukharev. The first information that Soviet servicemen were in the hands of the Afghan armed opposition began to come through in 1980. But at that time, regrettably, we did not fully realize all the tragic consequences, the inhuman conditions in which our boys might find themselves. We believed that they would be returned on the basis of universally accepted agreements, universally recognized humanitarian laws. Occasionally it proved possible to surround a band, rout it and rescue our soldiers held prisoners. Subsequently a terrible picture emerged. They had been brutally mistreated and none had survived.

It was only later that the mujahedeens changed their tactics and acted more decently. The facts became public knowledge, because as the saying goes, "truth will out." They preserved the lives of those whom they hoped to make "accept their faith" by force or whom they could exchange for their own men who had been taken prisoner.

N.T. What is known about the conditions in which they are kept?

A.S. As I said in the official statement, we know that when the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan was begun, 312 servicemen were officially listed as missing.



Alexander Sukharev, L.L.D. Saw action during the Great Patriotic War. Worked in the Central Committee of the Young Communist League and CC CPSU. Till 1988 Minister for Justice of the Russian Federation. President of the Association of Soviet Lawyers, member of the Bureau of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, and other international legal and humanitarian organizations.

The mujahedeens are constantly on the move, and dragging prisoners with them is a heavy burden. There is a constant shortage of food and water, consequently some of our soldiers are suffering from extreme malnutrition – for they are the last to be fed, and only if there is anything left over. In order to prevent them escaping they are sometimes put in chains. There is no question of even the most rudimentary medical aid.

All these are the real and horrible facts which we have heard not only from our boys who have just been released. A representative of the American public organization Freedom House who visited a camp where Soviet prisoners of war are being held, said that of the 312 listed as missing, only just over 200 were still alive. The rest had either been executed or shot trying to escape.

Most of our boys are in Pakistan, and some are in the U.S., Canada and other countries.

N.T. Are there any officers among the missing soldiers?

A.S. Yes, there are 16 officers. Commanders of squads and companies, lieutenants and senior lieutenants. But we know least of all about their fates.

N.T. What is known of the circumstances in which our soldiers were captured?

A.S. First of all, one has to understand the extreme conditions in which these soldiers found themselves – boys of eighteen and nineteen. One has to understand the hardships and suffering that fell to their lot when after being taken prisoner they found themselves in a foreign land. To a certain extent they were victims of circumstances.

A few words about these circumstances. According to our information, some were taken prisoner in battle after having been wounded or concussed. Others were captured outside the boundaries of their camps, and finally there may have been a very few cases of thoughtlessness, indiscipline and faint heartedness, which objectively resulted in their finding themselves "on the other side." So naturally they behaved differently when imprisoned.

Some did not break down or betray their oath of loyalty to their country. That was confirmed by the rebellion of Soviet prisoners of war in one of the Peshawar camps in 1986. They killed the guards, captured an ammunition dump and for 3-4 days fought the mujahedeens and regular Pakistani troops. According to our information, they were all killed but remained true to their military duty.

But not all were able to stand up to the hostile propaganda, hardships and deprivations. Some were intimidated, psychologically and ideologically brainwashed and forced to do things detrimental to our country. Apparently that is why some of the boys now in the U.S., Canada, Switzerland and the F.R.G. are afraid to return home.

N.T. What do you think lies behind this fear?

A.S. We know that the forces of confrontation, some of the mass media abroad, in the attempt to smear the reputation of our soldiers and disorient the Soviet and world public, are trying to portray them as "voluntary" exiles, who refuse to return to their country. It could be that a few of them have made unpatriotic and at times anti-Soviet statements.

But to begin with, one should take into account the conditions in which such statements are made. I find it hard to imagine how a person, forcibly torn from his country, humiliated and constantly having to worry about the simplest means of existence can "express his will." Today I have no facts to confirm that some of them voluntarily declined to return to their country.

Take for instance all the hullubaloo around Nikolai Ryzhkov, a Soviet soldier taken prisoner by the mujahedeens. He was forcibly moved to the U.S. Yes, we know of his statements in the Western mass media, but we also know what compelled him to make them. Many heard of his categorical refusal to return to his country. But then it turned out that he had found his way to the Soviet embassy in Washington and appealed for help to return to the U.S.S.R.

It could be said that he saw the light rather late. So what? What is important is that this realization did come.

N.T. But it is known that he had done serious harm to his country.

A.S. Yes, that's right. And for that he was brought to trial and sentenced. That was in 1984. Today, looking back critically at that time, one sees that probably another way out could have been found. Today such a solution has been found. By decree of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet he has been pardoned and reinstated in all his rights of citizenship.

N.T. Yet there are people who constantly allege that any former prisoner of war returning home will inevitably face repression.

A.S. Such allegations are totally unfounded. As I have already stated officially on behalf of the Soviet government, soldiers who served in the limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan and who return from prisoner-of-war camps or foreign countries to the Soviet Union will enjoy the full political, social and other rights provided under the Constitution to all Soviet citizens. And even those guilty of serious misdemeanors against our country will be granted an amnesty stemming from the highest principles of socialist humanism. Soviet people have firm faith in their compatriots and in the power of humanism and justice. We hope that the years spent far from their country will not have changed their attitude to our socialist values, or dampened their patriotic feelings.

N.T. And what about those boys who have already returned home?

A.S. So far there are six of them. Some escaped and found their way to the Soviet embassy in Islamabad, others were returned with the help of the International Red Cross in Switzerland, and others again were exchanged. Their names are Didenko, Charyev, Metelkov, Pattakhanov, Yazkuliyev and Zhurayev. They are working, studying, and have acquired families. Some of them have described to a wide circle of readers how they are now faring.

N.T. Will servicemen who were taken prisoner of war enjoy the benefits established for those who served in Afghanistan by government decision?

A.S. Yes, they will.

N.T. You are known not only as the U.S.S.R. Prosecutor-General, but also as the President of the Association of Soviet Lawyers, and a member of the Human Rights Commission. In your opinion, what role could the Soviet and world public play in getting our boys released and returned home?

A.S. We hope that our wish to see all our countrymen return to their homes will find a response and understanding among the world public. Especially among lawyers and doctors whose humanitarian activities should be founded on the principles of justice, not on emotions or political sympathies or antipathies.

That is why I should like to appeal through the magazine New Times to international, regional and national lawyers' organizations, and in particular to lawyers in Pakistan, the U.S., Canada and the European countries.

We express our gratitude to the International Red Cross for its humanitarian aid.

The mass media could also be of great help in giving support to our boys and helping them return to their homes.

Deciding people's fates is a highly responsible matter. It is essential to exclude completely any temporary considerations or attempts to make political capital. Naturally in this noble effort to get our soldieres released the tone should be set by the public organizations of the country: the Red Cross Society, the Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Peace Fund, the Association of Soviet Lawyers, the organization of internationalist soldiers, and by our journalists.

We hope that, in addition to moral and legal support, the necessary medical food and other aid will be given.

And all of us on whom the speedy return of our young fellow-citizens to their country depends even in the slightest way should remember that they are being eagerly awaited by their families and friends, particularly by their mothers.

This photograph was taken by a correspondent for the West German Sterr in 1983. The names and fates of those in the photograph are unfortunately unknown.

Interviewers: Veronika Khilchevskaya and Konstantin Isakov

From the Editor. When the issue was going to press, a report was received that another Soviet prisoner of war had been released. Private Alexander Yankovsky is 20 years old. He was born in a worker's family in Minsk. He, too, is a worker, having graduated from a vocational school. After spending six months as a prisoner, he was exchanged for the chief of a band who had been captured. After three months of treatment in hospital, Alexander is in good health and is now back in his unit to continue his army service.

Freedom of choice

—this universal principle should be observed by all the "characters" on the world political scene

There can be many varieties of historical development. We are convinced of this again and again when we look back on the road we have travelled in history. For many years we were far too inclined to let ourselves be hypnotized by "the ultimate truth," whether it concerned our domestic development, or our policy on the world arena. Today we see that there were often alternatives which we overlooked and that we made mistakes that could have been avoided.

A lesson for the future

History, however, does not recognize the subjunctive mood. Once a possibility has become a reality it remains a fact that can be acknowledged or ignored, but cannot be changed. The main lesson that we have to draw for the future is that one cannot advance blinkered along the path of history, seeking nothing of what surrounds one, i.e., the varied and interconnected social processes at work around one. It could be, to use the metaphor from the film "Repentance," that our road does not lead to the temple, but for that we have no one to blame but ourselves.

How many irremediable historic losses mankind suffered when the search for new ways was proclaimed political heresy and the right to choice denied in advance. Diversity of views and political approaches is a natural manifestation of the numerous varieties of social development. Therefore socialist pluralism is not a questionable luxury, but an essential condition for the normal life of our society, the means of finding the optimal solution.

We still have to overcome the perception of pluralism as an anomaly that is deeply rooted in many of us, because for decades monolithic homogeneity was proclaimed an undisputed fact, as was unanimity on all important issues in our society. Will we be able to adapt to the idea that there should be unity in variety in our society and that we are not threatened with a return to the times of deadening "monism."?

Foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, and a society's image of the outside world is inevitably a reflection of its own image. For many long years we have in fact been deeply suspicious of the manifestations of pluralism in the world arena. And not only because of our own ideological views, but also because of the realities of the international scene.

"He that is not with me is against me"

The activities of dozens of countries in the world arena naturally always created a picture of great variety. But often this was just a semblance of variety, behind which stood the domination of several major powers, while at best, the other countries were relegated to the role of extras. And although none of these powers acquired world hegemony, international relations were profoundly undemocratic.

After World War II a bi-polar structure arose in international relations, with the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. as the principal antagonists. During the years of the cold war the rules of the game on the world scene were simplified to the utmost. Each "gain" for the U.S.A. was automatically seen as a "loss" for the U.S.S.R., and vice versa. The extreme ideologization of relations between countries bred a black and white vision of the world, which was divided clearly into "ours" and "theirs," "friends" and "enemies." From the point of view of the main participants in the confrontation, the biblical slogan "He that is not with me is against me" summed up the quintessence of foreign policy wisdom. In keeping with this logic, each country had to establish its position on one or other side of this global confrontation. Thereby freedom of choice for most countries was either extremely limited or totally non-existent.

The cold war was the choice above all of the American elite, which sought the means to mobilize American society into supporting Washington's global position of strength policy after the second world war. But that choice also allowed Stalin to maintain in our society the siege mentality that he needed to consolidate his personal power in the country. That also made it easier for him to impose command-administrative methods in our relations with countries that had chosen the socialist path.

Subsequently, our actions were often just a reaction to the provocative actions of the imperialists, although not always an adequate reaction. Because of this approach to foreign policy, our own freedom of choice always turned out to be very limited. We were drawn into the ruinous arms race, concentrated on counteracting imperialism in the military sphere, and made utterly inadequate use of political instruments to strengthen our security and improve the international situation. But the range of choice in international affairs proved as a result to be extremely narrow – and for our chief adversary, the logic of the cold war left little room to see the real changes in the world and construct a policy in accordance with them.

It is unlikely that we would have understood the need for a radical revision of our approach to the outside world had it not been for perestroika within our society. Having realized that command-bureaucratic methods were no good inside the country, we began to think of their adverse effect on our foreign policy as well. As was pointed out in Mikhail Gorbachev's report, even the most important decisions were at times taken without a comprehensive, collective examination and analysis, and at times even without duly consulting our friends.

At first glance the leaders making foreign policy decisions had complete freedom of choice. In reality, however, they were often tied down by their own prejudices and were unable even to imagine that there could be alternative solutions to the various problems. Society as a whole had to pay a high price for such an approach, since, as Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out, not always it was taken into account what this could cost the people and what the consequences of the choice might be. But society was not offered a choice – the choice was made for it, albeit in its name.

Only the consistent democratization of

society can serve as a reliable antidote to the power of the command-administrative system. Genuine democracy is unthinkable without freedom of choice.

Today we are seeing the beginning of an open discussion of our foreign policy problems. An open democratic discussion is the best guarantee that no point of view deserving of attention, no serious alternative action will remain outside the public's view.

The rights of countries and peoples

International relations, too, need to be democratized. Freedom of choice should also be made the inalienable right of countries and peoples, the right to choose their own course without having to look over their shoulders for the reaction or even the mightiest powers. Tolerance should be the norm of behaviour not only between members of a civilized society, but also in relations between states. That is not an easy thing to achieve. Over each society hangs the weight of tradition and prejudices, and therefore the temptation is always strong not only to regard its choice as the only right one, but also to try to impose it on others.

Such an approach today is not only hopeless, but is also immoral. It is hopeless because the modern world is so diverse – this indisputable fact can be ignored only at one's own peril. Recognition of the universality of the principle of freedom of choice means bringing one's views into line with present-day realities, and that is the central precept of the new political thinking. Of course one can pretend that in recent decades nothing has changed and the world still remains irredeemably polarized. However, lately the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. have resembled not so much the leaders of united cohorts as gladiators exhausting each other in an endless struggle before the eyes of a large audience. As a result both countries have had to face the fact of their antagonism failing to make any sense from the point of view of the real processes of international development, while denying other countries freedom of choice is becoming a dangerous anachronism.

Refusal to recognize the right to a choice is immoral when the question of the survival of human civilization is at stake. It only leads to the aggravation of all international conflicts and breeds new ones, pushing mankind closer to its own demise. Moreover, today it is clear that we are threatened not only by the mountains of nuclear weapons, but by the results of civilization's own advance, such as the catastrophic pollution of the environment. A considerable proportion of the human race, despite all the achievements of civilization, continues to go hungry, and millions of people are dying of starvation. In these circumstances can one claim a monopoly on the truth and deny nations freedom of choice, when many of them have come to play an active part in world history?

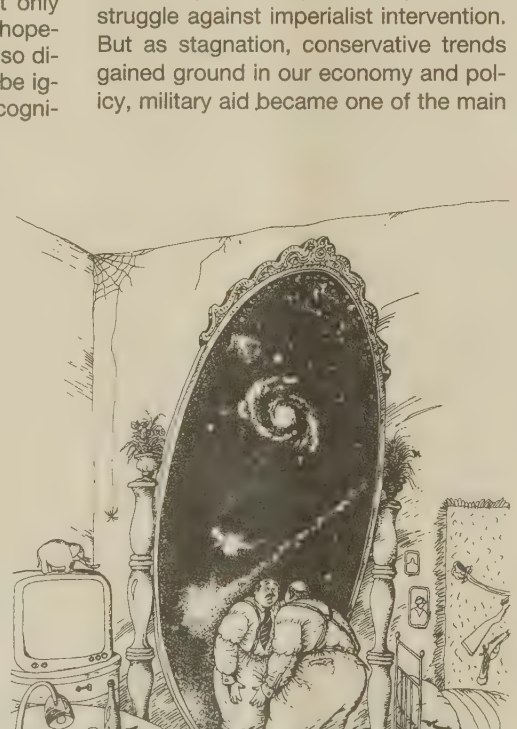
Only by force of example

Our country had to defend its right to the choice it had made in the most difficult of historic tests. That is why we cannot remain indifferent to the fate of those peoples who choose the course of building a new society, and that is why we have always sought to help them defend their choice. It was not for nothing that many peoples regarded the Soviet Union as the only force they could rely on in the struggle against imperialist intervention. But as stagnation, conservative trends gained ground in our economy and policy, military aid became one of the main forms of aid we could give to our friends among the developing countries. So once again we were drawn by imperialism into a struggle in an arena alien to socialism – the military one.

We have no intention of leaving any of our friends to the lurch, but today it is more important than ever to see what the real choice made by a society is. At the end of the seventies, the Soviet leadership was apparently sure that Afghanistan had decided on the socialist option, and that it should be supported. In practice, however, it turned out that Afghan society in many respects does not accept the socialist reforms there and seeks a choice that is more in keeping with its historical and national traditions. The new political thinking has made it possible to assess the realities soberly and realistically, and today thanks to the Geneva agreements, the people of Afghanistan are able to make full use of their right to socio-economic and ideological-political choice.

Freedom of choice is a universal principle that must be observed by all who operate in the arena of world politics. Yet the United States, for instance, shows a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm for the idea of democratizing international relations – and this despite the reality of bourgeois democracy inside the country and the rhetoric about loyalty to democracy the world over. Freedom of choice should be extended to one's own allies, but Washington seems to find it particularly hard to give up thinking in terms of blocs. Surely the proposal to abolish NATO and the WTO simultaneously should make it easier. It doesn't matter that such a prospect still looks very remote, but Washington and Moscow should show greater understanding and tolerance of the choice made by their allies, whether in their domestic or their foreign policy.

Such freedom of choice presupposes the need to refrain from carrying over ideological differences into the realm of relations between countries. Of course, every society has the right to believe in the correctness of the course it has chosen. But, in accepting the principle of freedom of choice, it cannot seek to impose its own choice on others by force, only, perhaps, by force of example.



Drawing by Garif Basyrov

IGOR MALASHENKO
Cand. Sc. (Hist.)

No slackening the pace

"The delegations of the two countries have been instructed to return to Geneva on July 12. It has been agreed as a matter of principle that, once the remaining problems are solved and the treaty and its associated documents are agreed, they will be signed without delay."

The above quotation has been taken from the Joint Statement on the results of the Gorbachev-Reagan Moscow summit, and is concerned with the treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive arms, whose text had not been agreed by the time the summit began. So what problems still remain outstanding?

This was the first question I put to special envoy Alexei Obukhov, the chief Soviet delegate at the U.S.S.R–U.S.A. talks on nuclear and space armaments, before he left for Geneva.

"I would first of all like to note," he said, "that at the Moscow summit progress was made in several major directions. However, there are still very serious issues to discuss. One is the issue of the observance of and nonwithdrawal from the ABM treaty over the agreed term, which, I would say, is a basic problem. For without strict observance of this treaty it will be simply impossible to effect any radical cut in strategic offensive arms. After all, one cannot work to end the arms race here on earth and, at the same time, transfer it to outer space. That is pointless.

"The Soviet side has proposed the simple and logical method of making the proviso, recorded in the Washington statement of last December 10 and reaffirmed in Moscow, legally binding. It should be made the groundwork for the respective agreement, without any 'supplements' that would misinterpret the understanding reached at the highest level.

"The second major issue, one long mooted in Geneva, concerns long-range sea-based cruise missiles (SBCMs). Already in Washington the two sides pledged to agree to their limited deployment and concrete ceilings for them. They also said it was essential to devise a means of verifying observance of the appropriate commitments.

"We have gone our part of the way, inasmuch as during the negotiations conducted after the Washington summit, the Soviet side put forward a whole programme of undertakings to ensure confidence that the SBCM restrictions imposed would be strictly observed. Our proposals are of a comprehensive nature insofar as they incorporate missile production controls down to reciprocal inspection aboard any warship. Then, such national technical means as, for instance, long-range control for the detection of nuclear SBCMs on board ships, would likewise be intensively employed. To ensure reliable verification we also proposed that long-range SBCMs be deployed on a limited number of types of surface ships and submarines.

"Unfortunately, to this day we feel that the Americans lack a constructive approach. We are interminably bombarded with questions, but have not so far seen any positive ideas or proposals that would meet us on the way. It is being said that control is a tricky matter, doubts are being voiced. The U.S.A. has suggested that we confine ourselves to parallel declarations of intent with respect to SBCMs, but have no accord on control envisaged. That, plainly, cannot serve as a foundation for agreement.

"It is our conviction that our proposed comprehensive range of measures would settle the matter of control, which in that case would not represent an obstacle."

"What is the substance of the SBCM control experiment proposed by the U.S.S.R.?"

"We have suggested using long-range means of control. Thus special instruments carried, for instance, by helicopters or other aircraft flying low close to ships could ascertain whether or not the said ships carried nuclear SBCMs. This sort of experiment could be conducted, for instance, in the Mediterranean. In the event of any doubts arising, on-board inspection could be conducted, for which the appropriate procedures should be drafted.

"But, let me emphasize, that represents only one of the methods for control and verification; it is no panacea but merely one link in the system of control measures that the U.S.S.R. is proposing. Should the entire system be operative I am convinced that the sides could be reliably confident that the commitments are being observed.

"Regrettably our partners are declining to conduct this experiment."

"Why, do you think?"

"Evidently a political solution with regard to the institution of effective SBCM restrictions has yet to mature in Washington. In other words, the question of control is being exploited as a pretext to turn down proposals for such restrictions.

"It must be admitted that the problem of SBCM control is no simple matter. However, a solution could be worked out, provided a comprehensive approach is taken. However, the circles in the U.S.A. are reluctant to see effective restrictions imposed on this type of weapon are exploiting every option to dodge a solution. It should be borne in mind, however, that without SBCM restrictions, any understanding to cut strategic offensive arms would rest on a shaky basis from the outset, indeed, would be out of the question.

"The SBCM issue must be settled. There is a fine basis for that, notably the understanding recorded in the joint statement of last December 10."

"In a New Times interview shortly after the Washington summit, talking about prospects for a strategic offensive arms treaty, you said something to the effect that though a great deal of work had still to be done, and though time was running out, there was a more than 70 per cent chance of success. Could you now define the chances of success in terms of percentage?"

"As you can see, the 30 per cent chance against that I suggested has proved decisive. I think nowadays one should look at the situation not from the point of percentages, but in terms of what it really amounts to.

"Firstly, one must realize that the very issue of a strategic offensive arms cut is much more complicated and far-reaching than that of medium- and short-range missiles. Here I feel I must note the tremendous positive impetus that ratification of the INF treaty has imparted to the work of the delegations. That is most welcome. So let us forego arithmetic.

"Currently the situation depends on the existence of those outstanding focal is-

sues mentioned at the beginning. There are also other headaches. However, there are areas where the Moscow summit has made for advances, for instance, mobile missiles and long-range air-based cruise missiles.

"Let me put it this way: much still has to be done, but the work can be successful provided we do not pause but unswervingly forge ahead as far as the remaining issues are concerned, provided we look for and evolve effective mutually acceptable solutions. A constructive approach from both sides is essential, of course. Don't see this as a complaint, but at times we see our partners in Geneva as lacking in such an approach."

Dismantling medium-range missiles at the U.S. Air Force base in Mutlangen (F.R.G.). When will the dismantling of strategic arms start?

"Do you think it will be possible to see a strategic offensive arms treaty signed before President Reagan's term of office expires?"

"I don't rule that out. At any rate we are going to Geneva with hopes of finalizing the matter."

"It is plain that the SDI programme which implies a withdrawal from the ABM treaty is being modified in a rather noticeable way. Is any compromise conceivable here? After all, the 'Reykjavik package' appeared firmly tied, didn't it?"

"We shall not be discussing SDI as such in Geneva. However, the connection between the problem of a strategic offensive arms cut and the prevention of an arms race in space is both profound and organic. Any treaty on a radical strategic offensive arms cut must be accompanied by an agreement stipulating observance of and nonwithdrawal from the ABM Treaty over a definite period."

"What period has the Soviet side suggested for nonwithdrawal from the ABM treaty?"

"Nine or ten years."

"Before each round of negotiations, the Soviet delegation is briefed. But at what level? And does this imply any rigid limitations, beyond which you must not go? Or are you given a flexible arrangement that leaves for manoeuvre?"

"Let me begin by noting that in the Soviet Union today we are interested of a creative approach whatever the matter in hand. This absolutely applies to what the Soviet delegation is and will be doing in Geneva. Our only limitation is the need to ensure equal safeguards for both sides and not let either party gain any advantages. Naturally, a cornerstone demand is to have truly effective restrictions that would make for a tangible scaling down in nuclear confrontation, and serve to end the arms race in a number of dangerous directions.

"The leadership's instructions orient the Soviet delegation to search for solutions that would suit both sides.

"In concrete terms this means that at the talks we closely follow our partners' response to our various proposals and initiatives. We also study the U.S. proposals. We report back on everything. However, it is important not only to provide information on the exchange of views, but also to suggest solutions for one or other issue. The new approaches in our foreign policy, the new political thinking, call for initiative and a genuinely creative effort.

"I would compare the talks with pioneering the unknown, as each time we could come up against unexpected twists and turns behind which something may lurk. To understand one's partner correctly and sense his mood is also a psychological process. However, as the Americans also say it takes two to tango. Reciprocity in talks is essential."

"After the Moscow summit you had an almost six-week break between rounds in the negotiations. To what use did you put this time?"

"For me, there were roughly three equal periods. My superiors sent me to Paris and Bonn to meet prominent politicians, whom I briefed on the results of the summit. The next period was spent working on documents for the next round. Finally, the last fortnight was a restful period for me, my first in four years.

"I followed the Communist Party Conference both on television and in the newspapers with particular attention. I read everything right through. The resolutions adopted are encouraging and stimulate still more intensive work in the area of foreign policy. I would like to contribute as best I can to the solution of those truly innovative tasks which our Communist Party has set. I see the Geneva talks as a major forum for advance towards real disarmament, and the implementation of the programme for phasing out nuclear weapons that Mikhail Gorbachev put forward in January 1986."

"What is the attitude in France and the F.R.G. towards the prospect of halving strategic offensive arms? Could the U.S.A.'s allies make a positive contribution here?"

"The general impression I gained from my meetings and conversations in the two capitals is favourable. In both Paris and Bonn I heard support for the INF treaty. Approval was also voiced for a more intensive Soviet-American dialogue. I would say that the conviction of the need for a radical strategic offensive arms cut is also gaining ground in influential political circles in both countries. Indeed it is realized that there is no alternative to that to ensure a better world situation. Public support for peace and arms reductions is mounting, and this is a most powerful factor.

"I think we can count on a positive contribution from the U.S. allies, the more so as a problem of stupendous importance for all of humanity is at stake."

"Does the Soviet delegation have any surprises up its sleeve?"

"I would say that we are going to Geneva with the sole wish to consolidate and promote everything positive reached both before and during the Moscow summit. I must say that a lot has been achieved.

"The Soviet delegation is prepared to undertake intensive productive work at the talks in both groups, on space and on strategic offensive arms, in full accord with the instructions given the two delegations by the leaders of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. after the Moscow summit.

"It is extremely important not to allow any slackening, any slowing down of the pace. It is essential to keep up the pace reached and move ahead still faster. Then we shall arrive at the results the nations are looking forward to."

"The best of luck to you. Thank you."

Dmitry Pogorzhelsky

Photo from Time (U.S.A.)

Our European home in a European garden

Soviet parliamentarians visit the Council of Europe

The fate of Strasbourg is the fate of Europe. For centuries the city was the site of rivalry and military conflicts. How much blood was spilt over it in the wars between France and Germany! And, of course, there was something of a special meaning attached to the decision to make Strasbourg the headquarters of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – the organization that had invited the Soviet parliamentary delegation.

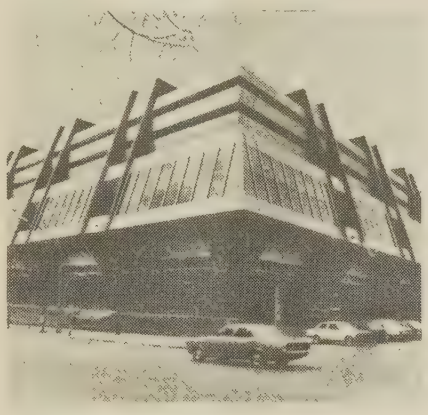
Not just to understand each other

The delegation of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet did not travel to Strasbourg solely to get acquainted with this influential regional organization uniting 21 countries and find out in what fields we can cooperate. Our very first meetings with the President of the Assembly, Louis Jung, and heads of the main committees, showed that although we belong to different social systems, we can not only understand one another, but cooperate in many spheres of the life of our continent.

We knew that the Assembly does not concern itself with military issues. Its sphere is culture, human rights, education and public health. But can anyone today remain untouched by the problems of security, disarmament and trust? The nuclear threat worries everyone. I remember the words of Karl Ahrens, a Social Democrat deputy from the F.R.G.: for Europe no difference exists between a nuclear or a conventional war; any conflict on its territory would lead to an irreparable catastrophe. The same idea ran like a red thread through our conversations with other members. That is why the concept of a common "European home" outlined by the Soviet delegation met with such a response. Moreover, in his speeches Louis Jung referred to it repeatedly, describing the Council of Europe as the garden in which all inhabitants of the common European home could meet and mix.

The Assembly of Europe is not indifferent to the problems of our times. It supports the Soviet-American INF treaty and is calling for the speedy conclusion of the Vienna talks so that work can be resumed in Stockholm on measures of trust and security in Europe. The Assembly favours economic cooperation with the socialist countries and is critical of the West's policy of embargoes and bans... But all that in the context of humanitarian problems.

The talks in the Palais d'Europe confirmed that all Europeans have common concerns and common duties, as well as



Palais d'Europe

interests in common which can be discussed and compared in the course of contacts between representatives of the East and West.

The continent is on the move

I involuntarily caught myself thinking how much has changed in Europe since that day in 1949 when Sir Winston Churchill addressed the Council. Deep shifts in the way of thinking are taking place on the continent. The Helsinki forum made those who believed that Little Europe could speak on behalf of the entire continent and claim to represent it amend their views. Today political thought more and more often goes beyond the framework of Little Europe and embraces the continent from the Atlantic to the Urals. The idea of cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe is taking root in the thinking of broad political circles.

In that situation the Council cannot sit on the sidelines. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is no longer possible to resolve the problems facing the continent exclusively within the confines of one part of it – the West. United, joint efforts are necessary. In Strasbourg the wish to establish contacts was strengthened. A committee was even set up on ties with European countries that are not members of the Assembly.

For our part, we persistently sought to establish relations. Our perestroika has lent fresh dynamism to Soviet policy in Europe as well. So the desire of parliamentarians at last to begin a dialogue is mutual.

I particularly remember a meeting with one prominent member of the Assembly. He expressed the view that cooperation between the Council of Europe and the socialist countries could contribute to implementing the concept of a common European home and would promote the formation in the future of a more stable structure in the relations between the countries of the Old World. That is why closer East-West ties made sense to him.

Other members of the Assembly also echoed the view that no unbridgeable gap separates us. The vice-chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, Ludwig Steiner, remarked that the continent was on the move. We need closer ties than existed in the past, he said. We are closely following the changes in the Soviet Union and have the best intentions of establishing friendly ties with all the peoples of Europe. The chairman of another committee, Peter Sager, underlined that the first meeting of parliamentarians was only the beginning, the harbinger of mutual understanding, without which cooperation is unthinkable. And the President of the Assembly summed up by saying: "You are a great European country and we want to cooperate with you."

The dialogue in Strasbourg was so useful that even in the course of the first contact it proved possible to go beyond a mere exchange of information and agree on a working plan for further contacts, specifying the concrete subjects and forms of such cooperation. This provides for joint measures in the protection of the environment, ensuring the safety of the nuclear power industry, the preservation of cultural monuments, and the Soviet Union's participation in measures of the European Youth Centre, as well as in the fields of science, the arts and edu-

cation. An exchange of views was begun on ways and means of combating the drug problem and AIDS, protecting the population from diseases caused by environmental pollution and much more as well.

Human rights – the principal concern

The organizers of the Assembly proclaimed their aim to be the defence of the principles of parliamentary democracy, human rights, enhancing the role of common human values, the development of those things which the peoples of Europe have in common. In keeping with the spirit and letter of the Assembly's charter, the focal point of its activities is the individual. Since it was founded, the Assembly has drawn up more than 130 international conventions, which take the form of recommendations. I shall mention only a few: the European Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, conventions on culture, on transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities, on the suppression of terrorism and on the legal status of migrant workers. One could name others which at first glance do not deal with large-scale problems. But if one stops to think, they affect the lives of millions of people.

But the parliaments of the socialist countries also deal with questions of disarmament and air pollution, the exchange of art exhibitions, and confidence-building measures in Europe. These are issues that transcend the framework of blocs, unions and regional associations. So why not pool our knowledge, talents and the means to resolve them.

The Assembly's principal concern is human rights. In Strasbourg this topic was of course discussed. The main thing was to compare the two sides' concept of human rights and establish their points in common on which we can cooperate. And one other thing: to agree that the human rights issue cannot be turned into an instrument of confrontation. It should become a new field of cooperation.

I would say that the atmosphere of the meetings and talks in Strasbourg was largely determined by the way Soviet perestroika is influencing public opinion in Western Europe.

More and more bridges are being put up between East and West in Europe. It is a big and necessary job. A beginning has been made. But we should be in no hurry to predict how our relations will be built and how they will develop. One thing, however, can be stated with confidence: the Soviet parliamentarians, guided by the new political thinking, displaying patience, restraint, flexibility and good will, will persistently seek to expand dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.

Albert Grigoryants
STRASBOURG - MOSCOW

ARGENTINA

Ex-rulers in the dock

Trials of some of the leaders of the toppled military regime are being held in this large country at the southern tip of the South American continent.

In order to grasp the essence of what is now taking place I believe it necessary to review the country's recent history.

The question of why the Argentine junta fell in 1983 can perhaps be answered in a general way with a quotation from the writings of Maurice Druon: "Power that does not rest on the consent of those over whom it is exercised is nothing but deception and cannot be lasting, as this kind of power is precariously balanced between fear and mutiny, and at the winkling of an eye ceases to exist when the same thoughts occur to a sufficiently large number of people."

Corruption, stagnation and even the decay of the economy and the poverty of the masses resulting in turmoil bordering on insurrection led in the 1980s to the disintegration of military dictatorships in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay, and the fall of the Duvalier tyranny in Haiti, and compelled the Guatemalan military to hand over power to a civilian cabinet.

The regime by military juntas in Argentina was among the most cruel in the history of Latin America. According to the official data of the present civilian authorities, nine thousand people disappeared as a result of repression by the military. But civil rights organizations hold that the actual number of the disappeared is 30 thousand. Abducted people were tortured and murdered in secret dungeons. All questions about the fate of the disappeared elicited one answer: no information. Those who were particularly insistent were arrested or disappeared themselves. However monstrous, it is a fact that the military dictatorship even issued a decree under which the relatives of a missing person were paid a small lump sum in compensation if they were prepared to regard him or her as "deceased."

Retribution

Argentina is one of the few countries in the world and surely the only one in Latin America to try ex-rulers who committed crimes. In all the countries of the region, as in Argentina in the past, the rulers have got away with crimes ranging from terror to corruption.

The few officials of comparatively low rank who have been "punished" in Haiti are not worth mentioning. Though thousands of progressive people were subjected to violence under the military dictatorship in Uruguay, the new government has proposed a bill to amnesty those guilty and decided that no human rights trials will be held. Democratic circles are now demanding that a referendum be held as to the legality of this intention. The Uruguayan Constitution requires that 25 per cent of voters support a petition to hold a nationwide referendum. Thirty-four per cent of voters have already put their signatures to the petition.

Proceeding from the view that "a fish begins to stink from the head," Raul Alfonsin's government ordered the trial of the leaders of the former regime. It should be recalled that sentences of life imprisonment on former leaders of the military juntas, General Jorge Rafael Videla and Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, were passed by the court in December 1985, that General Roberto Eduardo Viola was sentenced to a prison term of 17 years, retired Admiral Orlando Ramon Agosti to four and a half years and Admiral Armando Lambruchini – to eight years in prison. Besides the abduction, torture and murder of prisoners, they were charged with arrogation of prisoners' property.

The head of the last junta but one, General Galtieri, and two other high-ranking military were given prison sentences for negligence in commanding combat operations during the 1982 armed conflict with Great Britain over the Malvinas (Falkland) islands. Their in-

Buenos Aires. The National Congress

competence resulted in the loss of many Argentine lives. The journal Araucaria de Chile published by Chilean democrats in exile said that the Argentine dictatorship had fallen as a result of the war, which had made scandalously obvious the fact that the generals were only capable of killing their compatriots.

The former police superintendant of Buenos Aires, General Ramon Camps, was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment late in 1986. That butcher once boasted in public that he was responsible for the abduction of 15 thousand people. Some of them were buried in unmarked graves. Camps in person tortured the editor-in-chief of the newspaper La Opinion, Jacobo Timermann. Camps ordered the torture of pregnant women with electric shocks. Such actions are quite in keeping with his statement that he shared some of Hitler's ideas.

But not all those implicated in the campaign of terror will be punished. The cases of those who "obeyed orders" in staging reprisals will be dismissed under a law adopted in Argentina in mid-1987. Under that law, the Prosecutor's Office ordered that charges be dropped against 12 high-ranking officers accused of exercising terror during the military dictatorship. Late in June the decision of the Supreme Court ruled to stop proceedings against the military accused of human rights violations in the provinces during military rule. This applies to over 1,000 persons.

The adoption of the law delimiting "the degree of responsibility" aroused considerable controversy amongst the public. Many people in Argentina had a negative attitude to it, viewing it as a serious concession to the military. Incidentally, Spanish jurist Perfecto Andres Ibanez wrote with regard to it in the Madrid-based newspaper El Pais that in the days of the dictatorship, the high Argentine judicial instances suitably blindfold, refused to see the pitiless sword causing tragedy for the thousands of missing persons and their families.

Yet the investigation of criminal offences continues. It has recently been made known that criminal proceedings will be instituted against the former minister of the economy Jose Martinez de Hoz and former minister of the interior Albano Harguindeguy. Some time ago the United States extradited the former military commandant of Buenos Aires ex-general Carlos Suarez Mason to Argentina (there is an extradition agreement between the two countries). Late in June news agencies reported continued trials of generals Jose Montes, Cesar Ferrero, Adolfo Sigwald, Juan Bautista Sasiain, Jorge Olivera Rovere and several lower-ranking officers.

Particular attention is being attracted by the cases of Suarez, Harguindeguy and Martinez. Each of them bears responsibility for numerous crimes. The newspaper El Pais says that their arrest makes Argentinians recall the recent past and opens an opportunity for the punishment of some other former high officials for their crimes.

Giraffe is gone

A rumour was circulated in Buenos Aires early in 1983 that a giraffe's head decorating a wall in Jose Alfredo Martinez de Hoz's apartment in the luxurious house "Cavanagh" was that of a giraffe from the local zoo, named Carolina, a favourite with the children of Buenos Aires. The poor animal had been slaughtered under obscure circumstances three years before when Senor Martinez was minister of the economy in the government of the military junta headed by Lieutenant-General Videla. There was such an uproar that the directors of the zoo had to order that the animal be exhumed, and it turned out that the giraffe's head really was missing. The ex-minister's wife sent a letter to the press, avowing that her husband would be accused of many things but not of ordering that Carolina be decapitated.

There has indeed been reason to accuse him of many things – of wrecking the economy, betraying the national interest, corruption. A member of a wealthy cattlebreeding family, the superminister, who held his post from 1976 to 1981, was one of the main figures in the junta. It was he who was called for a secret meeting by Videla and Massera shortly before the overthrow of the regime. The meeting was held at the Admiral's apartment. Martinez' machinations earned him universal hatred. He was nicknamed "Hood Robin," the idea being that while the legendary English outlaw Robin Hood robbed the rich to help the poor, Martinez "Hood Robin" did the opposite, robbing the poor to help the rich. Once at Buenos Aires airport, already in retirement, Martinez had to take refuge in the police station, so as not to be beaten up by enraged Argentinians.

The time when Martinez' career was at its zenith was a time of easy money when the artificial parity of the peso with the dollar and the influx of foreign currency as loans enabled the upper crust of Argentine society to line its pockets. These nouveaux riches could be seen enjoying themselves on tours abroad. Thus, on more than one occasion Martinez went on safari to Africa with his friend General Harguindeguy, leaving Harguindeguy's subordinates to conduct a witch hunt against "subversive elements" at home.

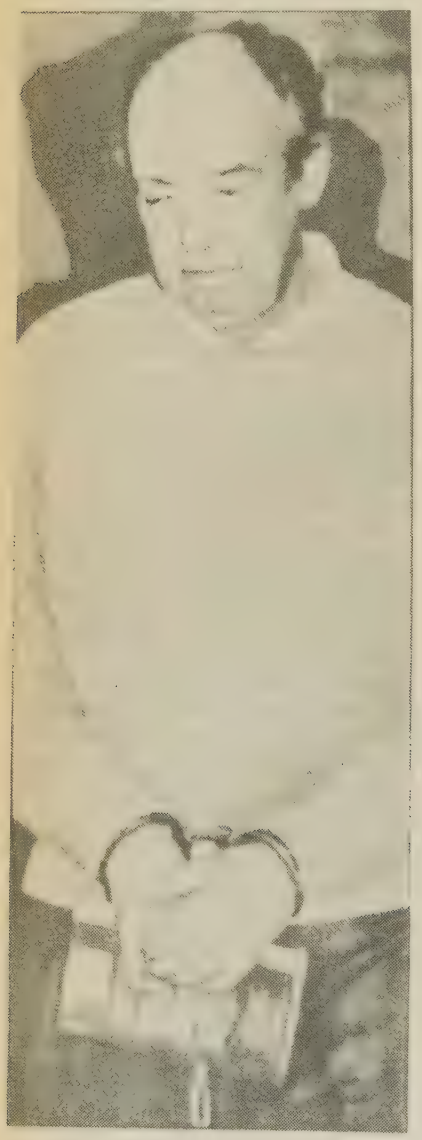
Martinez was arrested on a warrant from Raul Alfonsin's civilian government on the morning of November 16, 1984, and interned in the same prison as that in which members of the juntas that ruled the country after the 1976 coup have been awaiting retribution. Martinez was soon released on bail. After his first arrest and release on bail, the former "superminister" hoped to sit it out in the quiet of his country villas. And when he appeared in public, he strutted about feigning innocence.

Meanwhile an investigation was being conducted into the charges against the ex-minister's "subversive economic activity," manifested above all in the depletion of the finances of the state-owned Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales corporation, which had run up a debt of over five billion U.S. dollars to foreign, mainly U.S., banks during his period of office.

Martinez was also charged with shady transactions involving the purchase by the Argentine government of the Swiss-controlled Italo corporation. At Mar-

tinez' instigation, the Argentine government coughed up 400 million dollars, ten times the actual value of the moribund enterprise, which was on the verge of bankruptcy.

The defendant could have claimed that the damage to the treasury was a result of a mere miscalculation, had it not been for the fact that by the time he assumed the post of a minister in the military administration he was vice-chairman of the company's board. So he was in a position to know what kind of property he was offering. The special commission of the Argentine Congress that investigated the Italo case established the fact of a swindle but could not discover how much the ex-minister himself had received. He was charged with getting illicit profits for himself and third parties and causing damage to the state.



Ex-general Carlos Suarez Mason has reason to be depressed. Once he ordered people to be handcuffed. Now he is handcuffed himself.

Photograph from the newspaper El Pais (Spain).

The "third parties" have been indispensable. They were Juan Alemann, who represented the Swiss Motors Columbus in Argentina and was the chief shareholder in Italo. Martinez gave him a job on his own staff. Guillermo Walter Klein, who was in charge of economic planning, was Martinez' right-hand man in the ministry. Papers he kept in a strong-room contained plans to ruin and take over an industrial enterprise, and copies of telexes to international banks reporting moves planned by the Central Bank of Argentina. Such information is of special value to those who profit from currency speculation.

In December 1985 the judicial authorities ordered that Martinez again be arrested, and sequestrated his property worth 850 million dollars.

Many others besides the "superminister" were busy plundering the national wealth. They were the former military administrator of Buenos Aires, Brigadier Cacciatore, who squandered the city treasury, the chief of the customs office during the military dictatorship, who proved to be an inveterate smuggler, and many others. Demoted General Suarez, former head of the state-owned oil corporation, was found guilty of economic crimes.

The leaders of the regime were for ever on the lookout for a chance for personal gain. They even managed to embezzle the funds allocated for the holding of the world football Cup in Argentina in 1978. In the almost nine years that have passed since then, it has transpired that vast sums from the 500 million dollars allocated for the championship lined the pockets of its sponsors. Criminal proceedings were instituted late last year in this connection against the former vice-president of the championship's organizing committee, retired Admiral Carlos Lacoste, who held the post of the minister of welfare in the Videla government.

...And one more thing about the case of Martinez and his friend Harguindeguy: it has been reported from Argentina that both are also to be charged with illegal arrest and attempts at extortion in connection with an entrepreneur and his son.

Have they failed to learn their lesson?

It took the Argentine judiciary more than a year to get hold of ex-general Suarez, who had fled to the U.S. and hoped to ride out the bad times there. His hopes proved vain. The San Francisco court decreed that he pay 21.1 million dollars in compensation to an Argentine lawyer who had taken U.S. citizenship. The lawyer had been arrested and tortured over a period of four years when Suarez was commander of the Federal district of Buenos Aires. The verdict said that Suarez Mason had deliberately and systematically terrorized the Argentine population.

The U.S. court decreed that Suarez be extradited to Argentina so that he could stand trial for the 39 murders he had been charged with, as well as for forging a passport. Suarez was in charge of several centres of detention and torture through which thousands of people had passed.

In May, the court of first instance in Buenos Aires found Suarez guilty of murdering 39 people and also decreed that his property be sequestrated. Suarez was also charged with masterminding 23 abductions. The Buenos Aires legal chamber has asked the Ministry of Defence to restore Suarez to military rank so that he can be court martialled.

Suarez is guilty of far more crimes than those with which he is now being charged, but under the extradition treaty between the U.S. and Argentina, he can face trial only on the charges on the basis of which he was extradited.

The trials of military criminals, alas, have not led to a moral clean-up among the police, for example. All the chiefs of the Buenos Aires police, headed by general commissioner Alberto Miranda, resigned on June 17, after 600 policemen were subpoenaed to testify on facts of corruption. The administration of the Federal district of the capital had earlier sent a message to the police authorities expressing concern about the instances of corruption revealed in recent months.

* * *

...When he was head of a military junta, Roberto Viola once exclaimed: "There will never be a trial in Argentina like the one in Nuremberg." But now that the general is behind bars he has time to reflect on how mistaken he was. Trials continue in the country, even if crime was so widespread that not all the offenders will be jailed.

Vladislav Chirkov

The legacy of Reaganomics

An unbiassed analysis of the Republicans' economic policy

Georgi Skorov

After their meeting in Moscow, both Gorbachev and Reagan went back to their daily business. For the U.S. President, one of the main concerns is, undoubtedly, the economy, and it will remain such till the end of his term.

"He promised America growth without limits, progress without pain," Business Week wrote recently. "And for a time the bundle of optimistic notions that came to be known as Reaganomics seemed to deliver on that pledge. But the next President will discover that the future is full of limits – many of them imposed by Reagan himself."

What are the results of Reagan's almost eight-year presidency?

The chief trump cards

Reagan's economic policy was formulated in "America's New Beginning." This programme for economic recovery, made public in 1981, was enthusiastically received by U.S. business circles, including the military-industrial complex. It was also backed by the middle classes, attracted by Washington's promises to cut taxes and streamline spending on aid to the poor. The workers and the trade unions were cautious, fearing that the conservative administration would try to effect economic recovery in the interests of big business and at the expense of the ordinary people.

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The Reagan administration proclaimed a return to free enterprise without any hurdles. It promised to cut down federal rule and limit the economic functions of the state, and granted many privileges to companies. Among these privileges were lower taxes, early depreciation, deregulation of economic activity, relaxation of economic restrictions and safety engineering rules, and selling of government property.

Arms buildup has been a special concern of the administration. During the Reagan presidency it has assumed an unprecedented scale.

When it took office, the Reagan administration promised to put an end to inflation, balance the federal budget, increase the rate of accumulation, speed up the growth of labour productivity, and raise economic growth rates.

To what extent has the administration been able to carry out these pledges?

In the administration's own opinion, one of its main achievements is a drastic slowdown of the inflation rate. Indeed, the index of consumer prices dropped from 13.5 per cent in 1980 to 3.2 per cent in 1983. But this can in no way be attributed to conscious policy alone. Another factor, independent of the government's will, played an important part in the fall of the inflation rate. It was the drop in prices for fuel and food. In 1980 the two items accounted for 44 per cent of the rise in the consumer price index. But the principal reason for the dramatic fall in the inflation rate has been the virtual wage freeze during the 1980s, caused by a grave economic crisis in 1980-82, high unemployment, victimization of the trade unions, and the shifting of the cost of modernization onto the working class.

This is how the inflation rate was brought down. This does not mean, however, that inflation has been reduced to zero. In 1987 the rate went up to 4.5 per cent. According to Howard Kaufmann, a noted Wall Street financier, inflation could rise to 6 per cent by the end of this year.

The administration also boasts that it has cut income tax by 23 per cent, the biggest reduction in the recent history of U.S. capitalism, and granted substantial tax privileges to corporations. For some years many of them have effectively been exempt from taxation. The highest tax rate in the United States is now 28 per cent, as compared with 70 per cent in 1980.

But contrary to expectations, the tax cuts, far from stimulating the growth of accumulation, have had a directly opposite result – an increase in personal consumption and a drop in the level of savings.

The rate of savings fell from 9 per cent in the 1970s to 5.1 in 1985 and 2.8 per cent in 1987, an all-time low since the Great Depression. At the same time, multi-billion financial speculation mergers and take-overs have assumed unprecedented proportions. Such a policy has proved ineffective. One of the cardinal problems the Reagan administration leaves behind it is the need to push up the rate of accumulation of capital.

The present administration is proud of having been able to build up U.S. military power to unprecedented heights. Indeed, the United States has never had such immense military potential as today. But is it necessary? Does the United States feel more secure than before?

Judging from Washington's acceptance of the Soviet proposal to start talks on arms reduction, such a use of economic resources was not necessary to ensure the genuine security of the United States. It undermined and exhausted civilian production. Equally detrimental to civilian production was the predominantly military orientation of scientific research.

The distinguished American economist J.K. Galbraith, has analyzed the reasons for the decline in the competitive power of U.S. industry com-

pared with Japanese and West German industry. The difference is, he concludes, that the Germans and Japanese use their capital to replace old factories manufacturing civilian goods with new and better ones, whereas the United States is spending much more of its capital on military projects of limited or non-industrial use.

Nearer the goal or farther from it?

In the current decade the United States has unquestionably advanced considerably in the restructuring of its economy. The products of new and rapidly growing high-technology industries are revolutionizing technological processes in all sectors of the economy. The group of old, base industries has diminished and lost its former leading role. The services, including production-oriented ones, have grown on a tremendous scale.

It is evident at the same time that the prosperity of the 1980s is based on the unprecedented growth of the internal and external debt and the sharply increased imbalance in the economy. More and more often it is described as "illusory." The attempts to overcome the crisis in the U.S. economic mechanism with the help of market forces have not brought the desired results. A departure from current policy therefore, seems inevitable. The time of unthinking deregulation has passed. In the opinion of many analysts, eliminating the "excesses" of the Reagan administration will be the principal economic task of the 1990s.

The current prolonged growth of industrial output is by no means a sign of "lasting prosperity," as the advocates of Reaganomics claim. The Reagan administration, like the preceding ones, has failed to find a magic key to ensuring steady growth. This is borne out not only by the 1980-82 crisis, but also by the increasing signs of a new cyclical recession. Last year's stock exchange crash was the first warning of this kind. The downward trend of the main economic indices published by the U.S. Deparment of Commerce also shows that changes can soon be expected in the economy.

What is being debated today is when and not if a new economic crisis will begin – this or next year. The possibilities of anti-crisis regulation have diminished substantially as a result of the strategic errors of the Reagan administration in key areas of economic policy, the tax and budget sphere in particular.

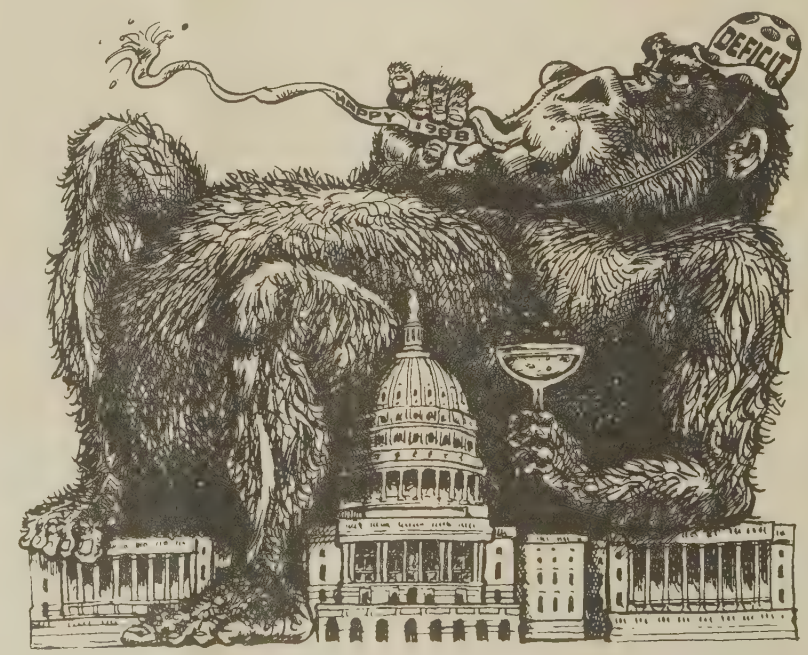
Nor has the administration been able to bring about a radical change in labour productivity, an important index of the nation's economic viability. In the 1980s the average annual rate of increase in productivity was 1.5 per cent in the U.S. economy as a whole and 3.5 per cent in the manufacturing industry. Nevertheless, it remained lower than the average rate achieved in the same years in France (3.8), Britain (4.2) and Japan (5.7)

Japan has surpassed the United States in labour productivity in the steel, automobile and electrical engineering industries, while France and the Federal Republic of Germany have almost attained the U.S. figures in these areas. The United States still leads in the aerospace industry, the manufacture of computers and software, information science, robotics, biotechnology, the production of up-to-date means of communication, test gear and new materials. However, its immediate rivals are challenging it in these fields too.

Reagan owed much of his election victory to his promise to balance the federal budget. But this aim – one of the principal planks in the Republican platform – far from being achieved, is as remote as ever. The federal budget deficit has reached an unprecedented level under the Reagan presidency. Today the state debt exceeds half the gross national product, while the payment of interest on it has amounted to about 150 billion dollars, equalling the budget deficit for the same year. More and more Americans are asking whether society benefits from such use of financial resources when the state borrows money from it in order to pay old debts.

The chronic imbalance between federal revenue and expenditure has far-reaching consequences for the operation of the economy in the principal capitalist state. Since the early 1980s the state has been the biggest borrower on the domestic credit market. It gobbles up a considerable part of the financial resources earmarked for accumulation. Federal loans with the aim of covering the budget deficit made up 15 per cent of all savings in 1970-74 and about 50 per cent of them in 1981-85. In 1986 they amounted to 90 per cent of all net savings in the U.S. private sector. This circumstance is giving rise to concern in the business community.

Such an acute shortage of internal resources for investment could trigger off a grave economic crisis were it not for external sources of financing. Only the influx of foreign capital has helped avoid serious financial tension in the American economy. This fact has made the U.S. budget deficit an international problem, a source of bitter inter-imperialist discord.



The U.S. federal budget deficit is expected to reach 180 billion dollars this year.

Reproduced from The Economist (Britain)

The richest debtor

The massive influx of foreign capital increased the exchange rate of the U.S. dollar in relation to the currencies of other capitalist states. The "strong dollar" was the Reagan administration's pride. Washington regarded it as one further proof of the revival of the United States' economic strength and tried hard to maintain the higher rate of the dollar in the first half of the 1980s.

The adverse effects of such a monetary policy soon made themselves felt. The value of American goods in dollars quickly rose, leading to a decline in the competitive power of American exports. The active balance of trade recorded during most of the postwar period changed in the 1980s to a chronic trade deficit.

As in the case of the budget deficit, the need to make good the trade deficit compelled the United States to apply to the international credit market. This caused one more imbalance, namely, a deficit in the balance of payments on current operations. The international financial standing of the United States began to deteriorate rapidly. In November 1980, when the Republican Party led by Reagan won the election, the U.S. was the world's biggest exporter of capital. It is estimated that by the time Reagan leaves office the country's foreign debt will reach 600 billion dollars, and by the early 1990s, a trillion dollars. In just a few years the biggest creditor in the capitalist world has become its biggest debtor.

With its present foreign debt and an annual interest rate of 8 per cent, the United States will have to export nearly 50 billion dollars this year and about 100 billion dollars annually at the beginning of the next decade. This will be an appreciable deduction from the national income even for such a rich country as the U.S.

Last year payments on foreign investment in the United States exceeded receipts from American investment abroad. This means that per capita national income will begin to diminish with all that this implies for living standards and economic growth rates.

Living on credit

Such a trend can be delayed for some time with the help of new debts, and it seems that this is the direction in which things will develop. But sooner or later Americans will have to tighten their belts appreciably.

The inevitable decline in the consumption level of the American people will unfold in the coming years against the background of social inequality which has become more pronounced under the conservative right-wing administration. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the wealthy 20 per cent of the population accounted for 43.5 per cent of the national income in 1985, more than in any year since the assessment of such data began in 1947.

At the same time, 60 per cent of the population in the lower-income bracket accounted for 32.4 per cent of the income in 1985, less than at any other time. The contrast in the distribution of property is even more striking. The top 10 per cent of the population own 57 per cent, and the lower 50 per cent only 4.5 per cent of the accumulated wealth, with whites constituting 98 per cent of the first group.

In the past few years many American factories have been compelled to reduce or completely stop production because of the influx of cheaper imports. Though the United States has been able to avoid mass structural unemployment of European proportions thanks to the creation of 15 million jobs in the 1980s, mainly in the services, the situation in the manufacturing industry is different.

From one to two million industrial workers have been sacked annually in the 1980s, with about a third unable to find a new job. Half of those dismissed agreed to take up less skilled jobs, at wages 30 to 50 per cent lower than their previous earnings.

Simultaneously, the number of Americans living below the official poverty line has increased, as has the number of homeless and people aided by charities. The fight against poverty is to hold an important place among the numerous issues America will have to tackle in the 1990s.

Such are the results with which the U.S. economy is approaching the presidential election.

* * *

At this moment the reader might exclaim "I'd be worried!" He might even agree that the United States has its own problems. However, he could also ask whether such problems as those existing in the Soviet Union could arise there.

For instance, over half a million new tractors stand idle in the Soviet Union because there are no drivers for them. At the same time the construction of the world's largest tractor plant worth four billion rubles is going full blast. The idea of exporting tractors cannot be considered, as the world market has long been glutted with them.

At the recent Party Conference, the President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences spoke of the existence of 300 (sic!) major technical novelties that could raise manufacturing technology to unprecedented levels and make a genuine breakthrough into the 21st century, ignored at the big industry.

Or take another example. The department in charge of meliorating, i.e., improving, our environment irrigates arid land in such a way as to make it saline, while seas become shallow, lakes dry up and fertile land turns into marshland.

One should not think, nevertheless, that if the Soviet Union has serious economic troubles, the woes of America can be easily dealt with. Take, for instance, living on credit, when Americans are running into debt and the total debt amounts to nearly nine trillion dollars, with the economy assessed at half that. When the state treasury is empty and the government owes one and a half trillion dollars to its citizens and foreigners.

When the value of the dollar has shrunk, been cut by half in the last three years, as has the buying power of Americans, especially those who live from hand to mouth! When at the height of the longest postwar period of "prosperity," the "record low" unemployment figure stands at 6-7 million!

The problems arising at a higher level of economic development with a higher average level of public consumption are not less serious or less simple. Understanding the complexity of these problems, we hope that the American people can solve them at the lowest possible costs, because, as Mikhail Gorbachev has repeatedly stressed, we are living in an interrelated, interdependent and integral, though controversial world.

Factories to the workers!

A delegate to the 19th National Communist Party Conference, director-general of the research and production association for the cable industry, VNIIKP, D.Sc. (Tech.) **Izyaslav Peshkov** *interviewed by New Times.*

New Times. The Law on State Enterprise went into force on January 1, 1988. What has its effect been on the performance of your association?

Izyaslav Peshkov. In theory we have been operating as a self-supporting and self-financing research institution since the act became law, but I am afraid that in real terms we are not self-supporting at all. The transition from command and administrative methods of managing industry to economic methods has been very slow indeed. Government ministries and departments are reluctant to hand managerial levers over to worker collectives. The principal criterion of performance is still the total amount produced. The Ministry of Electrical Engineering is concerned about only one thing – that we should produce several million rubles' worth of goods over and above the planned target every three months.

State orders fail to act as an economic booster. This year state orders cover 87 per cent of our output and, understandably, the remaining 13 per cent is not enough to give us room for manoeuvre.

But let us look at it in this way. There has been a great deal of concerted criticism of jacked-up state orders, but what goes unnoticed is that this is the only means available so far of supplying industries with equipment and materials. In spite of the fact that the present system of supplies is far from perfect, there is no other. There is no wholesale trade in the means of production, and we cannot buy anything with our earnings. This results in paradoxical situations: for instance we have had to buy minibuses from a Soviet factory for hard currency, because if we tried to buy them in any other way we would have had to wait several years. My own view is that

without a broad wholesale trade network, restructuring of the planning system is impossible.

All is not well as far as the quotas for the distribution of profit issued by the ministry are concerned. A smaller and smaller proportion of the profit is left at our disposal, and according to our estimates, it will decline from 43.4 per cent in 1987 to 27.8 per cent in 1990. I am sure you will agree that if more than seven tenths of your earnings is taken away, it looks rather like confiscation. That is why the actual amount of money left with the association is decreasing while output is to grow and the number of empoyees remains the same. How can we develop our production capacity in the circumstances?

N.T. The 19th Party conference has set forth a number of necessary measures for self-management and democratization within work collectives, society as a whole.

I.P. A collegiate managerial body, the directorate, has been working at our association for many years. It includes managers of association and heads of public organizations. All decisions concerning our staff are taken after they have been discussed by the directorate. There is also well-established feedback, and our staff are informed of the issues discussed by the directorate, and the opinion of the work collective is always taken into account. Our association is quite large: we have a staff of about six thousand. There are quite a few problems and that is why managers regularly meet with the staff to discuss whatever issues may arise. We have elected a work collective council and it is doing a great deal of work.

Now, as far as electing managers is concerned, the situation here is not a straightforward one. In line with tradition, managers compete for their posts at research institutions. There is also a system of staff attestation. The Law on State Enterprise provides only for electing managers. How can all this be made to tally?

We have no intention of doing away with the system of electing people at sessions of the learned council. Before a contest is announced work collectives in our own departments elect candidates, but we have no intention either of turning elections into another campaign whereby everybody is dismissed and new people are elected at one go. The adopted rules of elections provide for holding elections when a post is vacant or if there is a conflict between staff and management. There have been elections in many of our departments and I can say that collectives have never made a mistake, although the results of the elections have not always coincided with the proposals of the director-general's office.

We also have a sociological service which polls our employees. The results of the polls are taken into account in dealing with issues that concern the life of the collective.

N.T. You also head the intersectoral research and engineering complex Svetovod (Lightguide). As far as I know, this is a novel organizational structure for this country and it has not been faring all that well. What are the reasons for this?

I.P. The main obstacle to its performance is departmentalism, and we have not yet conceived of a way of negotiating it. The complex incorporates a number of research institutions run by the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, factories run by various ministries and design bureaux. All these in-

stitutions are controlled from the top by their own government ministries and departments which do not encourage them to engage in work outside the immediate scope of their activity. I am afraid the good ideas incorporated into the program of Svetovod have not yet been fully realized.

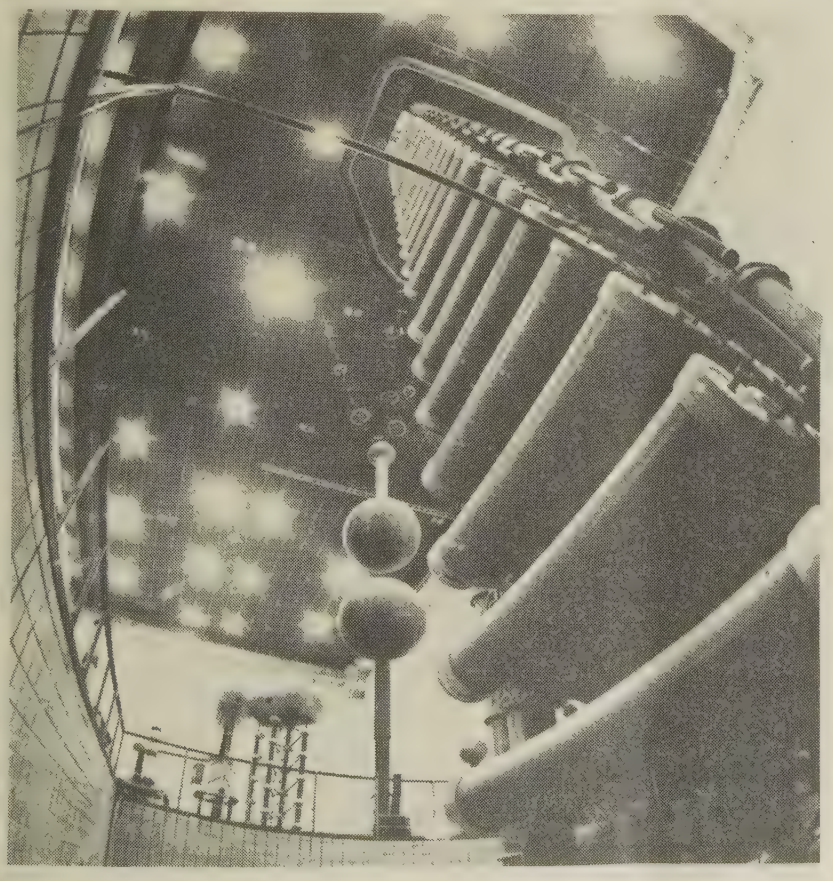
N.T. Your association was one of the first in this country to acquire the right to conduct transactions on the external market independently. How do you go about using that right?

I.P. Our external commercial activities are different in many ways from those of other enterprises and associations that have the same right. Our job is to conduct import and export transactions for the whole cable industry and purchase cables for the whole country. Regrettably, our industry cannot meet the entire demand for cables and wires and this interferes with our exports. While the association has done quite well in exporting software (we have sold about 30 licenses for our technologies over the past seven years), it has failed to achieve a notable increase in the export of cables.

We have encountered quite a few problems in expanding our exports both at home and abroad. The external market is saturated, and it is difficult to compete there. To make things worse, our marketing expertise is inadequate. We must acquire marketing skills that are new to us. We must learn to advertize our products and explore the market. Another problem is that the so-called surplus principle is still at work, i.e., only that of which this country has more than it can use can be sold abroad. As I said, we do not have enough cables and wires, and therefore any funding for export is hard to come by.

Departmentalist attitudes are a major stumbling block. Our foreign trade agency has the right to buy whatever our association may need, but for some reason it hasn't the right to buy what enterprises in our industry may need. That is why if someone wants to buy our cables, the production of which may require purchasing materials abroad, we have to seek the assistance of other foreign trade agencies that are not interested in our products, and the amount of purchasing they do on our behalf has to be small. There are quite a few problems that will have to be dealt with so as to enable us to conduct all import and export transactions independently.

We have made some progress in selling software and services. Many companies have asked us to provide them with our expert services, in, for instance, assessing the quality of their products, and we have concluded a number of deals.



A high-voltage cables test lab.

N.T. Does your association have any plans to set up joint ventures?

I.P. Yes we do, and we have already made some progress here. Late in May we signed all the papers for the setting up of Volmag, a Soviet-Austrian venture. At the end of next year the company's products will be marketed in this country and abroad. Negotiations are under way on the setting up of several more joint ventures.

That is an entirely new avenue of activity for us, and we have encountered not a few problems. One of them is that there is no legal basis for the activity of joint ventures. In China, they have passed more than seven hundred legal regulations on setting up joint enterprises and the number of legislative acts concerning them here in this country is in single figures. Home and export prices for the products of joint enterprises are incompatible, and tax is fixed at 30 per cent regardless of profitability. There is no procedure for liquidating a joint venture.

On the other hand, there are plenty of instructions on the organization of staff and we are required to comply with them. Joint ventures are set up precisely because we need the highest possible productivity and profitability. Joint ventures have the most advanced equipment and technology, and this means that the number of employees and their pay must be in accordance with their high quality production capacity, but the acting instructions take no account of that.

Procedures for crediting joint enterprises and opening hard currency bank accounts are excessively complicated. The monopoly of the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of the U.S.S.R. leads to a situation where the hard currency and ruble accounts of a joint enterprise have to be in two different cities or two different banks.

There aren't many problems as yet involving the supply of materials to joint ventures, and we have managed to deal with them so far, but when the number of joint ventures increases, the absence of a state system of supplying joint ventures or an integrated system of selling their products may land us in serious trouble.

Strange as it may seem, the shortage of hotels is another problem. Thousands of experts visit us annually and finding hotel accommodation here in Moscow is a big problem.

Joint ventures are obviously a necessary and profitable undertaking (about which Kabaidze, a delegate from Ivanovo at the Party conference, emphatically spoke), and we shall be working hard to do away with all the obstacles facing us.

Interviewer **Pyotr Mikhailov**

On the threshold of ecological crisis

Why is Zaporozhye short of breath?

The population of this regional capital in the southern Ukraine is just under 900 thousand. There are 112 industrial enterprises run by 29 government ministries here. Zaporozhye is the Ukraine's third most imortant industrial centre. Its industries were set up during the early five-year plans around the famous Dnieper hydropower station. This information is important for an understanding of the conflict that will be discussed here.

"The ferrous metallurgy accounts for 36 per cent of the industrial output of Zaporozhye and is responsible for the pollution of the air and water in the city."

"We don't pollute anything at all. It's just that some people have developed the habit of blaming all on industry."

The first quote is from a booklet issued by the City Party Committee, the City Soviet Executive Committee and the City Council for Environmental Protection. And the second quote is from a statement at a session of the bureau of the regional Party Committee by the director of the Dneprospetsstal plant, Oleg Molchanov. He read the booklet and knew that his own plant was among the offenders. He also knew that on the eve of the session of the bureau a group of experts had arrived in the city from the Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy in Moscow to help local industries devise ways of reducing the pollution of the environment. If the situation were really as Oleg Molchanov claims it is, what would there be to reduce?

The events that we are describing here took place on the eve of the 19th CPSU conference, and that is one reason why the response to them was so widespread. The problem did not arise yesterday, and it is the process of restructuring in the country that dictates the need to deal with it without delay.

Data that used to be classified has been made public and indicates beyond any doubt that the concentrations of pollutants in the air in Zaporozhye is well above permited limits, that the water of the Dnieper is not quite suitable for drinking, and that the incidence of diseases caused by environmental pollution is on the increase.

An ecological pressure group demonstrating in Zaporozhye

The public response to these reports was one of shock. The public used to be told that everything was in order, and the bad news immediately led to the formation of ecological pressure groups. The first such group was formed to protect Khortitsa, the largest island in the Dnieper. It is within the city limits. Considerable progress has been made in dealing with the ecological problems of the island, although quite recently many people believed that it would be impossible to save it. We'll be discussing the fate of the island below because it reflects the problems and achievements of environmental protection in the context of restructuring.

The pressure groups were pretty vociferous, and the atmosphere began to grow tense, but the impression one had was as if they were all sounding off at Hyde Park Speakers' Corner, because what they had to say had little or no impact. It was only after public protests had led to a mass rally that the municipal authorities and Party bodies were forced to start a dialogue with the pressure groups. It soon transpired that each side was pressing for the same thing: a dramatic improvement in the ecological situation, although different methods were being used. It also transpired that the pressure groups and the authorities were strategic allies confronting the offending industries that account for the fame and problems of Zaporozhye.

Little attention had been paid to the ecological situation when the Zaporozhstal steel mill and other giant smelting plants were built on the banks of the Dnieper during the early five-year-plan periods. The nation needed metal. Iron ore, coal, water and electricity were nearby. Metal could be smelted cheaply here, and not at "any price," as the popu-

lar phrase went at the time. The planners of the industrial development of the region realized that the Dnieper and the air in the city could become polluted, but the danger was assumed to be remote and to all intents and purposes ignored, because the production of steel was the overriding concern.

With time the government ministries and planning agencies came to see Zaporozhye as one big industrial construction site, and that attitude became deeply ingrained. Planners and officials at the ministries got used to a situation where industrial facilities could be built far more cheaply than in other places, and the social needs of the city and its ecology could take a back seat. For as long as the voice of the public was not heeded, that policy continued unimpeded, although it is hard to understand the reasoning of the managers of the offending industrial facilities. After all, they live in Zaporozhye themselves, and their families live there too.

When the public started to protest at plans for the reconstruction of Zaporozhstal because these failed to account for the social and ecological needs of the population, the director of the plant, Vitaly Satski, declared that an end must be put to the discussion. He was addressing the bureau of the regional Party committee. But how was it to be curtailed? By simply forbidding it, as in the past? But that was clearly what he meant to imply. He suggested that participants in ecological rallies should come to the plants and help clear the waste, rather than waste their time holding rallies.

Who needs environmental protection regulations?

These regulations specify permitted limits for the concentration of harmful substances in the atmosphere and the water, and this would seem to suggest that under law they cannot be exceeded, but in real life they are flouted in Zaporozhye, and in other places as well.

The local plants of the ferrous and non-ferrous smelting industries have been exceeding the limits many times over for decades. The directors of the offending plants are concerned about the situation, or at least say they are, but it is not likely that they will be able to keep within the limits in the foreseeable future. At best they can approach the limits. With respect to some harmful discharges, the problem has not even been raised in practical terms.

According to the U.S.S.R. Minister of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy, Vladimir Durasov, who travelled specially to Zaporozhye, it is quite unrealistic to hope that the amounts of effluents and discharges of local industries can be reduced to normal levels. This would require time and a great deal of funding, and the production of aluminium, titanium, magnesium and electrodes cannot be halted because, as it is, they are in short supply throughout the country. His line of reasoning seems to make sense. Dmitry Ilyinkov, the director of an aluminium plant, has said, for instance, that the reconstruction of one shop to make it ecologically clean would take at least 10 years. The signs are that he believes that no one should require his plant to comply with ecological regulations over that period, and the government ministry concerned and the industrial inspectorate are indeed likely to understand his predicament and wait the necessary length of time. But has anyone taken an interest in what the public has to say?

In view of the above, one has every reason to wonder what is the purpose of ecological regulations if they can be treated as a mere good intention which does not have to be complied with.

During the years of stagnation the ecological situation was allowed to deteriorate to its present state, but what can now be done in practical terms to redress this? The government minister called for a profound review of the situation and suggested that industries be given some time to make the transition to waste-free, ecologically safe technologies.

That is something we have been hearing for many years, and nobody knows for how many more we'll continue to hear the same sort of reasoning. It might be a good idea if we adopted the procedure employed in Japan, whereby a timetable was drawn up for making industries comply with stringent ecological regulations and as from a certain date these regulations were enforced on pain of punishment, with no explanations accepted. In this way the Japanese managed to turn Tokyo from an ecological disaster into an ecological model. There is a good chance that we will succeed if we give it a try. We must learn to respect the laws that we ourselves pass and to respect them more than we respect a factory director or government minister.

The principal public complaint in Zaporozhye is that the authorities are not firm enough in ensuring that the factories situated in the city comply with ecological legislation and show too much leniency at the expense of city residents. It must be acknowledged that neither the City Party Committee nor the City Soviet Executive Council have taken a stand on the ecological issue. The public led the way here by setting up ecological pressure groups, and these were the first to sense the opportunities opened up by democratization and openness, the first to take real action. Party and government bodies did not adapt to the new situation at once and did not learn to deal on an equal footing with those to whom they had issued orders in the past. It transpired in the run-up to the Party conference how profoundly concerned about

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The Editors

the ecological situation the people of Zaporozhye are. Ecological issues loomed large in the instructions they gave their delegates to the conference and it is to the credit of the officials in the municipal administration that they became aware that conformism with respect to ecological issues is unpopular and took a more principled and consistent stand. The government ministries sensed that. Never before have so many representative and constructive conferences on environmental protection been held in Zaporozhye, and the second half of June saw a breakthrough in the public awareness of the problem as the first steps were made to keep the air in the city and the water of the Dnieper clean.

Khortitsa

In a way Zaporozhye was lucky: the island of Khortitsa, 12 kilometres long, is situated right in the middle of it. It is a national historic site and a vast oasis of greenery in the industrial centre.

It would seem that the relationship between the city and the island is straightforward enough. Khortitsa was proclaimed a wildlife preserve in 1963 and later it acquired the status of a historic and cultural reserve. What the city was bound to do itself at least for the sake of self-preservation was now backed up by the obligations it had assumed to the government.

During the period of stagnation, however, its status was interpreted as those in power saw fit. Transient interests and ambitions prevailed over laws and common sense. Officially sponsored and spontaneous economic activities continued on the nature island and all kinds of structures that had nothing to do with its purpose as a reserve were built. Motor boats polluted its lakes, bonfires burned in its oak groves, and poachers took pot shots there. The public put an end to that.

Members of the Khortitsa Committee set up three years ago against all the odds daily patrolled the reserve to keep away poachers and barbecue enthusiasts wielding ghetto-blasters. The action taken by the committee restored the natural balance in the southern part of Khortitsa and rare birds and animals returned.

It seemed now was the time to support the good cause, remove everything that violated the reserve status of the island, and start archaeological excavations at least where the traces of settlements dating from the 3rd-2nd millenium B.C. had been found and the fortifications of the Zaporozhye cossacks once stood.

Instead, the Khortitsa committee had to fight again, and this time the fight was against officials who ruled that a bridge across the Dnieper should be built here.

The situation followed a familiar pattern: in principle environmental regulations may not be violated, but in real life they can be violated with impunity. Khortitsa was proclaimed a reserve on paper and to all intents ad purposes its status was ignored. It was pointed out that the bridge had been designed 20 years ago, that the officials now in office were not responsible for the project, that it was high time the discussion was stopped and the construction of the bridge begun. The officials supporting the project said that the city needed the bridge badly and the damage it was likely to do to Khortitsa would be minimal.

The opponents of the project were pressured. They were accused of lack of civic pride and of demagogy, but in the end they won. A high-level commission appointed by the government of the Ukraine decided to build the bridge right next to the existing one, and leave Khortitsa intact. Was there any point in the stubborn official opposition that continued to the very end? Was it not clear from the start that the ecological damage done by the project would be irreparable? It is enough to visit any major construction site to see this.

After Khortitsa had been proclaimed a reserve, many enterprises and organizations built recreation camps and health resorts there "by way of exception." Perhaps this is the reason why some senior officials are not very enthusiastic about restoring the reserve's legal status. A YCL school was set up in one of the most picturesque sites on the island. The place is very good for study and recreation, but is it really right that members of the YCL, who as a rule have no complaints about their health, should have it while, for instance, a hospital for children is situated in a part of the city where air pollution is high? In principle there should be no hospitals or schools in the reserve, but if something must be there, priority should be given to sick children.

Looking into the future

A great deal of work is now being done in Zaporozhye to conserve nature and on no occasion in the past have so many people been involved in that sort of activity. Other cities now have quite a lot to learn from Zaporozhye, but still one has the impression that all this work is being done for the sake of somebody else and not the city residents. It is very often the case that a glowing report about some undertaking is valued more than the actual work done, and more often than not this is the case with nature conservation, and this goes for quite a few cities.

It is quite clear why this is so. It is impossible to purify the air over a big city quickly, and one's superiors and the public demand results. The director of a factory has to learn to issue encouraging reports about the action he is taking. The director has a lot of headaches as it is, and any violation of production plans would land him in trouble. Has he any energy left to deal with ecology, and will he deal with it as earnestly as he deals with matters of production? The evidence is that he will not. What we need is reformed economic conditions whereby pollution of the environment would be punishable under the appropriate legislation and, unlike today, inevitably entail losses to the offending enterprise.

The consensus at the moment is that Zaporozhye has been saturated with industries and that every permitted norm has been exceeded. What must now be done? Should the factories built with so much effort now be closed down? What awaits the city in the future?

Before WW II, the regional industrial complex that emerged here was among the first in the world. It was displayed at international fairs as a model for others. The territorial-industrial complex around the Dnieper hydropower station was planned as an integral whole, a very rational idea at the time.

The very idea of a regional industrial complex in Zaporozhye was eventually buried, with the ensuing overload on the environment. At the moment, every industry in Zaporozhye operates a self-contained complex subordinate to a national ministry. Whatever can be said of state interests, every ministry tends to mistake them for its own departmental interests. The Zaporozhye regional industrial complex has been carved up by various ministries and it is no longer an integral whole. Industrial complexes have spawned new production facilities over and above the potential of the region and in violation of its better interests. The result of it all is imbalances in development and an ecological mess.

There is every indication that the principles of the regional industrial complex must be reinstated and reliable estimates made of what Zaporozhye really can tolerate and what it can give the nation. Perhaps it would be a good idea to produce less steel here, but at the same time improve its quality. Consumers would welcome that, but gross output would decline and the ministry concerned is likely to be unhappy about it. That hurdle can and must be negotiated in the end.

The experience of other regional industrial complexes in this country has shown that the principles of their operation make very good sense in the economic, social and ecological spheres. They make it possible to harmonize the interests of industries and the region concerned, and that is a vital need as far as Zaporozhye is concerned.

Territorial industrial complexes have a future, and urgent action is now needed to save Zaporozhye from suffocating.

GEORGI BOGDANOVSKI and ALEXANDER GUBER, our special correspondents
Zaporozhye

Taking counsel from the Council

Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to the Polish People's Republic has ended. Its programme included a meeting with representatives of Polish culture. Our special correspondent who was in Poland shortly before the visit considers the problems of democratization of culture.

From our special correspondent
VITALY GANYUSHKIN

What is the subject of greatest concern today of peoples in all the socialist countries? I would say that the answer to this question was provided fully in that part of the report to the 19th All-Union Party Conference which stated that we regard socialism as a system of genuine humanism, in which man is truly the yardstick of everything...

So what must be done to ensure that this "yardstick" is not only provided with bare necessities of life, but that it should have all the opportunities offered by modern civilization for a full life, which everyone knows is granted only once and whose goal, I would say, should be in the maximum self-realization of the individual, the flourishing of all his abilities and talents? In this respect each country seeks and finds, while following the same main road, the ways and means that suit it best, and so is fraternal Poland, with its unique fate, strong national character and distinctive culture. It is seeking and finding its own original approaches to renovated socialism, not for the sake of an idea, but for the individual.

One discovers a certain drama in this search when one sees it in operation. As I have done, for instance. I worked for a long time in Poland and have repeatedly paid short visits to the country. I have closely followed the course of its cultural life, which seemed to flow over a series of rapids – because new spiritual streams were formed and are still being formed in this flow, as well as creeks where, as the Polish song goes, "quiet waters wash away the shores..."

I'll always remember those unhappy post-crisis times, when in Party and government offices, at factories and in village homes, at the bases of monuments and in the homes of friends and acquaintances, there reigned a spirit of concern and tension, slightly tinged, as my friends said then, by moderate optimism. The losses amongst art workers were counted – for many even eminent talents proved for different reasons to be on the other side of the barricades. The Party nucleus together with the remaining healthy forces were making superhuman efforts to protect the national culture and its present socialist character from destruction.

The Royal Castle in Warsaw which has been turned into People's Centre of Culture

And there were attempts to destroy it. Both from above and from below. For instance, in Poznan we visited the regional cultural centre, the tram workers' cultural centre. Their leaders told us what insidious means the illegal structures of Solidarity, which at the time had come out into the open, had resorted to in order to destroy that and other cultural centres as upholders of an ideology that was alien to them. Luckily in that region both cultural workers and party activists had proved too hard a nut to crack, and they withstood the attempts: not a single cultural centre in the region was shut down. And when a strike was called in the city, a Soviet song contest took place in the Cultural Centre. But in the Poland of those days not everything went that way. We saw empty clubs, libraries and cultural centres: the underground activists regarded them as a material burden for the work collectives and where possible reduced them to nil.

With every fresh visit I felt how my friends' guarded optimism was being transformed into confidence. In many respects the recent defensive reaction had been replaced by a creative and forward-looking one. The unions of creative workers had been restored, as had the material foundation of culture. But as is usual for the dialectics of

growth, the priority tasks of restoring order were being replaced by tasks more complex and profound.

The core of renovation

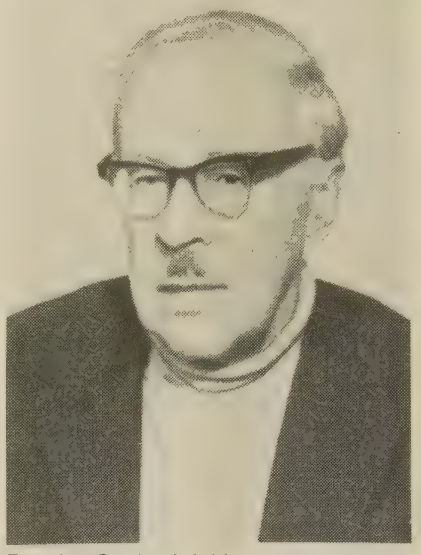
As in our own country, the renewal in Poland centres on democratization, including, or perhaps especially in the sphere of spiritual life and culture. I would say that the Poles have chosen the optimal instrument of change, which I would describe as the democracy of masters of their own fate. I shall illustrate that with one example.

In Dembica there is an agro-industrial complex called "Igloopol." It is jokingly described as a state within a state. I shall not describe its economic miracles (there probably isn't a single corner of the country where its products are not to be found). I shall speak of the cultural aspects, the life there. The leaders kept pointing in various directions: ...over there is our cultural centre, with an indoor skating rink, a swimming pool, a dance hall, classrooms for studying foreign languages with all the most up-to-date equipment... Over there – our sports facilities, an indoor gymnasium with three halls, next to it football grounds and an indoor shooting gallery. Over there are the Semiramis hanging gardens, a reservoir with all rowing and yachting facilities, and stables with race tracks. Further on are the headquarters of the amateur groups – more than 300 gifted artistes who have already won fame abroad. All that, and of course the enterprise itself, was started from scratch on virtually wasteland just over ten years ago.

But that is not all. Throughout all these years the enterprise has not been affected by any signs of crisis, not to speak of there being no question of curtailing the cultural programme. Why? Thanks to the good will of the leadership? That cannot be ruled out. But that good will is firmly reinforced by the fact that from the outset the enterprise was self-managing and self-financing. That is the key to its consistent success in all fields, and especially on the cultural front.

Turning from that one practical example to a more general theoretical conclusion. "We absolutely must instill into the mass consciousness the new, modern understanding or interpretation of culture. Culture is not merely how a person spends his spare time or something that makes life more beautiful, as it is still often understood. It is also the decisive factor in the shaping of the national consciousness, a person's outlook. There is a narrow pragmatic approach that defines culture as the result of socio-economic activities. But there is also a reverse connection: culture itself is a decisive factor in this development. I would say that the state of the economy of a country is concomitant with the state of its culture. It is above all the field of man's activities, and what if not culture shapes the human factor about which so much is being said today? But those who deal with the economy don't always understand that, let alone take it into account. And we, our Council, are called upon to make them understand this."

Those words came from Professor



Bogdan Suchodolski

Bogdan Suchodolski, the doyen of Polish culture, Chairman of the National Cultural Council. The Council has already been operating for four years and I follow its work carefully, because I regard this form of organization of the cultural process as the most rational of those now operating in the socialist countries. Why? First, because it is a democratic body, and ensures the direct participation of the public in running the cultural sphere; secondly, it is an even more democratic body because its activities can be summed up in the slogan: culture to the people.

This time I met Professor Bogdan Suchodolski again. He is a major authority, an eminent philosopher, an expert in the educational functions of culture. His life has been long and productive. He began his schooling in tsarist times ("we couldn't get used to your 'yery' – the name of the specifically Russian letter – and so we pinned the tables to our beds"), later he studied at Warsaw, Cracow and foreign universities. Before the war he was already a professor of pedagogics, and during the occupation he worked in the underground education network (it operated then as a form of the Resistance). After the war he was made professor at Warsaw University and a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Now, already well on in years, he has retired, but unable to sit doing nothing he agreed to head the National Cultural Council, a difficult and innovative business, as a social duty.

The Council operates as an advisory body to the Prime Minister of Poland. It fulfils its task by putting together drafts of Legal Acts and decisions in the field of cultural policy; and through its recommendations, based on representative discussions, it helps in the work of administrative bodies. The advantage of this Council is that, as a public body under the Prime Minister, it operates as a non-departmental but public body that can intervene not only in the sphere for which the Ministry of Culture and the Arts is responsible, but all others, including local bodies of power, if cultural problems are involved.

The democratization of cultural life is a dual process: the production of cultural benefits and running it has to be reinforced by work among those who use these benefits. That is why in Poland today so much concentrated effort is being directed to ensuring that the cultural potential of society is fully and equally accessible to all sections of society – both in the towns and in the villages. The impetus to this movement was given by the Law on the dissemination of culture adopted by the Polish Sejm at a session devoted especially to this problem. The Law deals basically with the material conditions of cultural and educational work at grassroots, especially in the work collectives.

The National Cultural Council presented the report on the state of culture that formed the basis of the debate in the Sejm and the decisions it passed. No major innovation in recent years affecting the country's cultural life has been taken without the Council's participation. It is now made up of more than 250 prominent figures in the arts and science, culture and education, public organizations and the national economy. So the state's job of running cultural life is reliably backed up by the participation of the public.

Culture and cost accounting

My latest visit to Poland came at a time when a discussion was at its height in the

press and in interested circles of another significant document – the schedule of financial and economic measures in the field of culture and the arts at the second stage of the economic reform. It was prepared on the initiative of the CC PUWP, taking into account the recommendations of the various committees set up by the National Cultural Council. As a Polish journalist remarked, for the first time the Muses have started using economic language, and policy in the field of culture has started to acquire cost-accounting features. The essence of the proposed measures was to make the arts self-supporting and, if possible, profitable, while in no way impairing the content of the cultural benefits. One of the several committees set up by the Council – on financing culture – has been working for a long time on the system of taxation of both industrial enterprises and the institutions of culture and the arts, as well as the rational spending of the money that comes in. In short, the public's influence on the cultural and creative process is ensured wholly and effectively, all the more so as in exceptional situations the Council can appeal directly to the Prime Minister, and Wojciech Jaruzelski, who until recently held that post, and now Zbigniew Messner invariably held questions of national culture close to their hearts, so it was never necessary to knock at their doors for long.

This time I also had occasion to observe an even more substantial step towards what I would call economically realized democratization. What I have in mind is the elections to local councils. Those who were elected on that day will have to carry out their duties as deputies in a qualitatively new situation, since, shortly before, the Sejm had introduced changes of principled significance not only in the existing law on people's councils and territorial self-government, but also in the constitution of the country. These changes provide for the decentralization of government, the centre of gravity being moved in keeping with the constitutional amendments from top to bottom, so that the people's councils dispose of the communal property that makes up the property of the local self-government. As a journalistic colleague put it: the owner who for a long time has been owner on paper only, has at last had his property restored. Naturally, the whole material and technical potential of culture, as well as the funds for its development, now too passes into the hands of the local people's councils.

"Castle meetings"

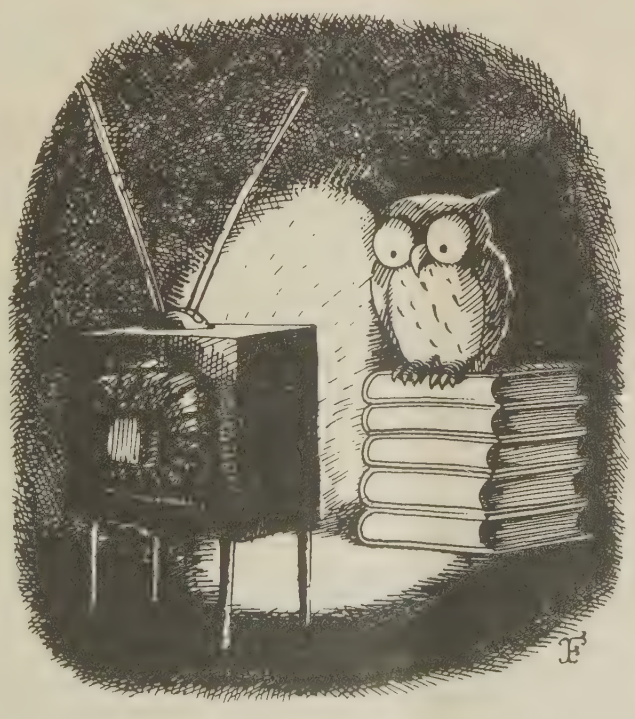
The Council's concern for the genuine mass dissemination of culture is not manifested in the top corridors of power exclusively. The Council is putting through an effective major programme, first and foremost, at local level, where everything associated with modern civilization is daily produced. For instance, Poland is well known for its tradition of work with the informal associations with which we are now having so much trouble. The Professor said that there were more than 1,000 such groups in the country operating under the constantly watchful eye of the Council (this is the job of one of the deputy chairmen). These units of cultural workers, enthusiasts and patriots in their particular area, operate as a rule in small towns and settlements, remote villages and at times are the only cultural centre in that area. But it is they that take care of ancient monuments, see to it that national customs and traditions are not forgotten, collect folklore, look after traditional craftsmen and organize various original measures. Just recently the Council brought together these enthusiasts of regional culture at a sort of rally, at which more than 100 participants decided to set up their own headquarters – a society of cultural activists.

The so-called "castle meetings" organized by the Council shortly after it was founded have become conspicuous landmarks on the cultural map of the country. Their name derives from the fact that they take place in Warsaw's Royal Castle, which after its restoration became a sort of People's Centre of Culture. The meetings are effectively free discussions between intellectuals, men of culture and the arts on a chosen subject. They are held regularly and evoke great public interest. It does not matter that these meetings do not adopt any resolutions when they end, but the very topics discussed reveal a profound approach to the future of the nation's culture. The discussions on "The Artist and Society," "The Polish National Character," "The National Language" and others made a noticeable impact on the public consciousness. "Castle meetings" are also held at times in different parts of the country. One, for instance, took place in a small village near Leszno where an ensemble known as "Our own theatre," a genuinely agricultural group with a classical and contemporary repertoire has been functioning for a long time.

The programme for further "castle meetings" is also worthy of note. Incidentally, it was about one of them – due shortly – that my conversation with Professor Suchodolski began.

"One of the traditions of the Council," he told me, "is to arrange meetings with eminent men of culture and public personalities, including those from other countries. As far as I know such a meeting has been arranged for when Mikhail Gorbachev visits our country. It will be one of the most significant "castle meetings," since Raisa Gorbacheva will be an honoured and respected guest as member of the Board of the U.S.S.R. Cultural Foundation. We are lookng forward with keen interest to talking to the leader of your country. We know his book on perestroika and the new thinking. It was first published abroad in Polish. We are also aware of the keen attention he and the whole Soviet leadership pay to the problems of culture in the restructuring of your society. We particularly appreciate Mikhail Gorbachev's views on Europe as our common home. A great responsibility falls on Europe for the dangers with which technical civilization, despite all its positive aspects, threatens people, and we should all seek a way out acceptable to everyone. In other words, we regard the forthcoming visit not only as an event in our political life, but even more, in my opinion, as an event in the broader context of modern culture and civilization in our countries and the world."

WARSAW



Drawing by Flisak (Poland)

Stating the case

According to the news agency MTI, thousands of ethnic Hungarians in Romania are seeking the right to live and work in Hungary. A mass rally has taken place in Budapest in support of the demands of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. Agerpres reports that the Romanian authorities have closed down the Hungarian Consulate-General in Cluj Napoca.

According to Romanian figures, there are one and a half million ethnic Hungarians in the country. The Hungarian government's estimate is under two million. Most of them live in Transylvania, a province populated by ethnic Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans. It used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian empire and was receded to Romania under the 1920 Trianon Treaty, which was reaffirmed by the 1947 Paris Treaty. Under the Romanian Constitution, ethnic minorities enjoy the same rights as Romanians. According to statements in the Hungarian media, disputed by Romania, in recent years ethnic Hungarians have been increasingly discriminated against in education, cultural activities, and contacts with citizens of Hungary. As reported by the Hungarian media as well as West German and Austrian press, ethnic Hungarians and Germans became especially concerned when the Romanian authorities, guided by economic considerations, decided to tear down some 8,000 villages and resettle the people in major "agro-industrial complexes."

The Hungarian National Assembly requested the Grand National Assembly of Romania to cancel such plans with regard to the areas inhabited by national minorities.

Excerpts from statements by party and government leaders of the two countries give an idea of the stands taken by them and of ways of normalizing relations between them.

History ordained that we be neighbours

(Excerpt from a statement by Nicolae Ceaucescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and President of Romania, at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP).

The Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party has deemed it necessary to call the attention of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party to the deterioration of relations between the two parties and countries, and to actions, articles in the press, and even statements by Hungarian officials hostile to Romania and the building of socialism in this country. They constitute inadmissible interference in our internal affairs and run counter to the Treaty of Friendship and other agreements between the two countries. They are damaging to relations between the two countries and their interests, and run counter to the universal principles of relations between nations and the principles of a policy of peace.

We proposed that a meeting be held between delegations of the central committees of the two parties to consider the situation and devise ways of dealing with negative phenomena and promoting cooperation and relations between the two parties and nations. We received a reply from the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party six weeks after our proposal was made.

In its message, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) said that the affairs of Romania should be dealt with by the Romanian Communist Party alone, and we waited for conclusions to be drawn from that statement.

The Hungarian comrades also said that they accept a step-by-step procedure for holding meetings to discuss the problems that have arisen between the two parties and countries. Regrettably, several days after we received their message, more chauvinistic, nationalist, anti-Romanian and anti-socialist actions took place, and on Monday (June 27 – **Ed.**) another public action was organized with the consent and, according to some sources, approval of the HSWP and Hungarian government bodies.

We believe that the raising of the issue here as to whether the conditions are appropriate for the normal functioning of the Romanian embassy in Budapest is justified.

There can be no doubt that many outstanding problems persist in Romania and Hungary. There may be differences over ways of advancing the construction of socialism. It has always been our view that every nation must choose its path of socialist construction freely and independently. The only supreme judge is the people of every nation, and the realities of life, which show better than anything else to what extent this or that course corresponds to the interests of the people and the general laws and principles of scientific socialism.

History has ordained that the Hungarian and Romanian people be neighbours, and it is their duty to cooperate with each other closely for the sake of social and economic progress. The leadership of the two parties and countries bear the responsibility for implementing that shared desire for cooperation and neighbourliness.

For our part, we shall make every effort to develop relations between the two parties and countries in the best interests of the two nations and the cause of socialism and peace.

The public are concerned

(Excerpt from a statement by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Matyas Czürös at a session of the Hungarian National Assembly.)

In recent weeks the Hungarian party and government leaders and public have had increasingly to try and influence Romania's political actions, which concern us as well. The latest Romanian moves, as, for instance, the ban imposed on using non-Romanian place names, and even more so, the start of the implementation of the so-called plan to change territorial-administrative arrangements in Romania, have caused widespread protests in Hungary and beyond it.

Romania's policy of forcible assimilation of ethnic minorities residing on its territory, including almost two million ethnic Hungarians, has compelled a large number of them to leave that country.

It remains a principled policy of Hungary to normalize relations and develop ties through all the means available to us. Our party and government as well as press statements have time and again reaffirmed our readiness to resolve outstanding problems in good faith and a businesslike and constructive spirit as befits good partners. We have said that satisfying the justified requests of Hungarians living in Romania is above all a matter to be dealt with by Romania and a responsibility of that country. At the same time, the fate of Hungarians, the preservation of their national identity and language, respect for their personal and collective rights, active participation in cooperation with Hungary, and the unim-

peded development of contacts between people are still important issues for us.

The dispute must be settled by working together

(Excerpt from an interview granted by the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers Karoly Grocz to the newspaper Magyar Hirlap.)

What help can in your view be given by the socialist community of nations in normalizing relations between the two countries?

I believe that other socialist countries should not intervene. Each socialist country can contribute to the settlement of the issue through the consistent implementation of its own policy with respect to ethnic minorities in line with Leninist principles. In this connection, many positive examples could be cited, among them the nationalities' policy pursued by Czechoslovakia. We know that Hungarians living in Yugoslavia have become fully integrated in the public, political, and economic life of that country on the basis of full self-determination and the exercise of their rights. The same can be said of Hungarians living in Transcarpathia in the U.S.S.R. I believe that if these two countries were to continue their policy with respect to ethnic minorities in the same constructive spirit they would thereby extend the best possible assistance to us, enabling us to understand each other as well.

Suggestions have been made that Hungary should address an international forum with a view to settling the dispute with Romania. What is your comment?

Yes indeed, such suggestions have been made by members of the National Assembly among others. I have received a great many letters with suggestions to that effect. Various Hungarian public organizations support the idea, the Writers' Union, for instance. But nevertheless, my own view is that the two countries must settle the dispute between themselves without seeking assistance from an international body.

Karoly Grosz has stressed that Hungary wants to live in peace with neighbouring Romania. "We do not seek a revision of postwar frontiers," he said. Karoly Grocz also said that he would be glad to visit Romania to discuss the matter.

The adventures of an aerostat

A Soviet research aerostat over which ground control was lost recently gave rise to worry that was not confined to scientists at the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of Terrestrial Magnetism, Radio Research and the Ionosphere.

In the past an incident of this kind could have led to a scandal. But today the stratosphere Odyssey caused no political collisions. Soviet embassies immediately informed the authorities in the Scandinavian countries, and this made it possible to keep a radar watch over the "intruder" while it was still over the Baltic. The hydrogen-filled outer layer and the cargo of 12 containers of scientific instruments slowly moved past the Danish island of Bornholm, then southern Sweden and then re-entered Danish airspace over the Kattegat straits at an altitude of 30 km. Thousands of holidaymakers on beaches near the town of Greno were able to watch the aerostat. True, many had already heard over the radio about the air traveller that had lost its way, so there was no panic.

First a helicopter from the Coast Guard service and then a vessel followed the aerostat, waiting for it to self-destruct by means of a special device that would not allow it to wander indefinitely at altitudes that could endanger aviation. As Moscow had announced earlier, this happened on July 6, at about 21 hours Moscow Time. The outer layer was deflated and a parachute with the instrument containers was released and began to fall into the sea, emitting light and radio signals. Naturally it caused no casualties and Danish sailors immediately delivered their find to their base at Frederikshavn. A stringent committee of experts determined that the instruments were strictly scientific.

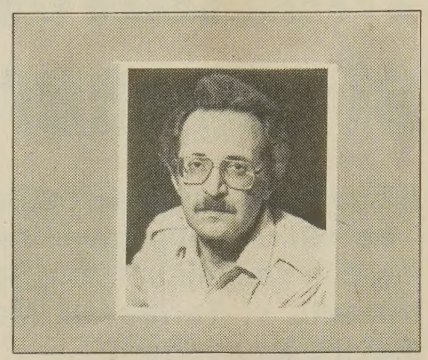
"I have never seen so many instruments sent up by one balloon," public relations officer Arne Esbensen said. "We did not open the containers, and the Russians can collect them at any time."

Indeed, all the Danish representatives did was to switch off the emergency radio transmitter, which was interfering with music programmes on Denmark's third radio channel. The process of disconnecting the wires from the batteries with the peculiarly appropriate name Priboi (Tide) was shown on TV. A spokesman for the Danish Defence Ministry, K.D. Andersen, said that Denmark would not demand compensation from the Soviet Union for the expense of salvaging the equipment, since the two countries had an agreement on the return of cosmonauts and space equipment that accidentally fell on their territory. This particular equipment will shortly be sent back to Moscow, but this time overland on a Sovtransavto lorry.

Frankly speaking, I half expected that there would be some people on the right in Denmark who would try to make a fuss about the air "intrusion" from the East. However, all comments were calm and merely stated and approved the accuracy of the Soviet information, which from the Danish point of view, differed sharply from the former practice of saying nothing about such incidents. This outcome provides a classic example of how reliable and timely information leaves no room for damaging speculation, and how trust excludes doubts. If from the technical point of view, the incident was an unfortunate mishap, the political mechanism worked without a hitch. So from the purely human point of view, I am glad that the events in the Kattegat straits ended without excitement.

Alexander Polyukhov,
our own correspondent
STOCKHOLM

JUNIOR WORLD



Teacher-pupil cooperation

I am rushing this article to press, afraid that the news item I wish to communicate may be drowned by other news, which is why I want to stress its significance. The journalist's paramount obligation is to underline something of importance which the public at large may have overlooked. That is the only chance he has of influencing developments.

G. Yagodin, chairman of the U.S.S.R. State Committee for Public Education, reportedly told school teacher delegates to the 19th Communist Party Conference: "Help us to restore that respectful human attitude to the child, so that the teacher will never be able to insult or demean the pupil. The Uchitelskaya Gazeta (Teachers' Gazette) has come up with a splendid definition of what our finest innovative schoolteachers are doing. The newspaper terms it the pedagogic of cooperation. Let us make that the rule in our lives."

But only the other day an instructor from a remote teacher-training college visited me to complain that when he wanted to organize a display of material about the pedagogic of cooperation, his youthful principal brushed him off with the words "What on earth for? We haven't received any instructions to do that yet."

Poor, poor us!

What is the matter? What is this pedagogic of cooperation that schoolteachers are talking about so enthusiastically?

In the autumn of 1986 Vladimir Matveyev, Uchitelskaya Gazeta's editor-in-chief, brought together in Peredelkino, just outside Moscow, seven outstanding and innovative schoolteachers, whose names are bywords now inasmuch as they are not just good at their job like thousands of others, but have come up with major discoveries that have completely changed the situation and mood in the classroom and in the school generally. Before the Peredelkino meeting, they were not even acquainted: they only knew of each other from the pedagogical bestsellers they had written. They are seven: Victor Shatalov, Sofia Lysenkova, Mikhail Shchetinin, Igor Volkov, Shalva Amonashvili, Vladimir Karakovsky, and Evgeny Ilyin.

I too was present at this two-day meeting. At the outset they resolved not to hit out at the school, not to censure its bureaucratic administration, not to describe the troubles that had bedevilled them as innovators, but to look for solutions, put together their individual experience and emphasize what was significant. After profound reflection, these seven highly competent schoolteachers produced a manifesto, which Uchitelskaya Gazeta published in its issue for October 18, 1986. Called "The Pedagogic of Cooperation," it has now been translated into many languages. In this way, "cooperation," a term encountered mostly in commentaries on international affairs, has become fundamental to education. Cooperation between whom? Between teacher and pupil.

Instead of all that is traditionally regarded as definitive for the school, the triad of syllabus, textbook and schoolteacher, the seven put the emphasis on the **relationship** between child and adult. Such is the crux of the matter. Of course, the syllabus, the textbook and the personality and erudition of the schoolteacher are all of vital significance, but if the relationship of cooperation is lacking between child and adult, if they don't pull together towards the same goal, if what dominates is an authoritarian punitive attitude ("Just learn! If you don't you'll get a bad mark, we'll have to tell your parents to come to the school, you'll be expelled"), then both syllabus and textbooks are useless.

On the other hand, if the relationship of cooperation is persistently established in classroom and school, if all of educational science and its methods are re-edited so that from being wishful thinking cooperation becomes a reality that each and every schoolteacher can attain, then the personality of the schoolteacher is ennobled. There is no alternative means of beneficially influencing the schoolteacher's personality. Everything else is mere claptrap.

Attracted by its explicit and positive programme, the country's finest teachers rallied around Uchitelskaya Gazeta after it published the manifesto. It was the first time that stagnation had not simply been censured and respect for the child not merely urged. It was the first time the schoolteacher had been given a new system of means and methods making for tangible success. The pedagogic of cooperation implies the desire and not the enforced imperative to learn. Hard to understand? Dangerous? Harmful? It would not seem so.

However, the Academy of Educational Sciences and the former Ministry of Education lashed out at the pedagogic of cooperation. "That's bourgeois!" the director of one educational research institute exclaimed. "That's West German!" another shouted. Eight leading academicians, including all the Academy's vice-presidents, put their heads together to devise and publish a wordy centre-fold rebuff. Meanwhile a proposal tabled by one of the delegates to the national schoolteachers' convention to have the resolution put in a good word for the pedagogic of cooperation, by that time supported by thousands of schoolteachers, was indignantly ridiculed from the platform. The convention unanimously voted against. That happened not so long ago and at the time we thought nothing would ever change.

However, new times have come. Of course, Yagodin's statement will not change the school overnight and for good. Of course, there will be difficulties ahead when dealing with the upper echelons of the educational authority, and much agonizing reappraisal at each and every school and in the heart and mind of each and every schoolteacher. Of course, by exploiting the forthcoming changes in Uchitelskaya Gazeta following the institution of the State Committee, the new pedagogy's adversaries will go all out to replace its editor-in-chief and silence a newspaper that sticks in the gullet of the bureaucracy.

Still, the statement's been made, and there's no getting away from that!

Simon Soloveichik

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